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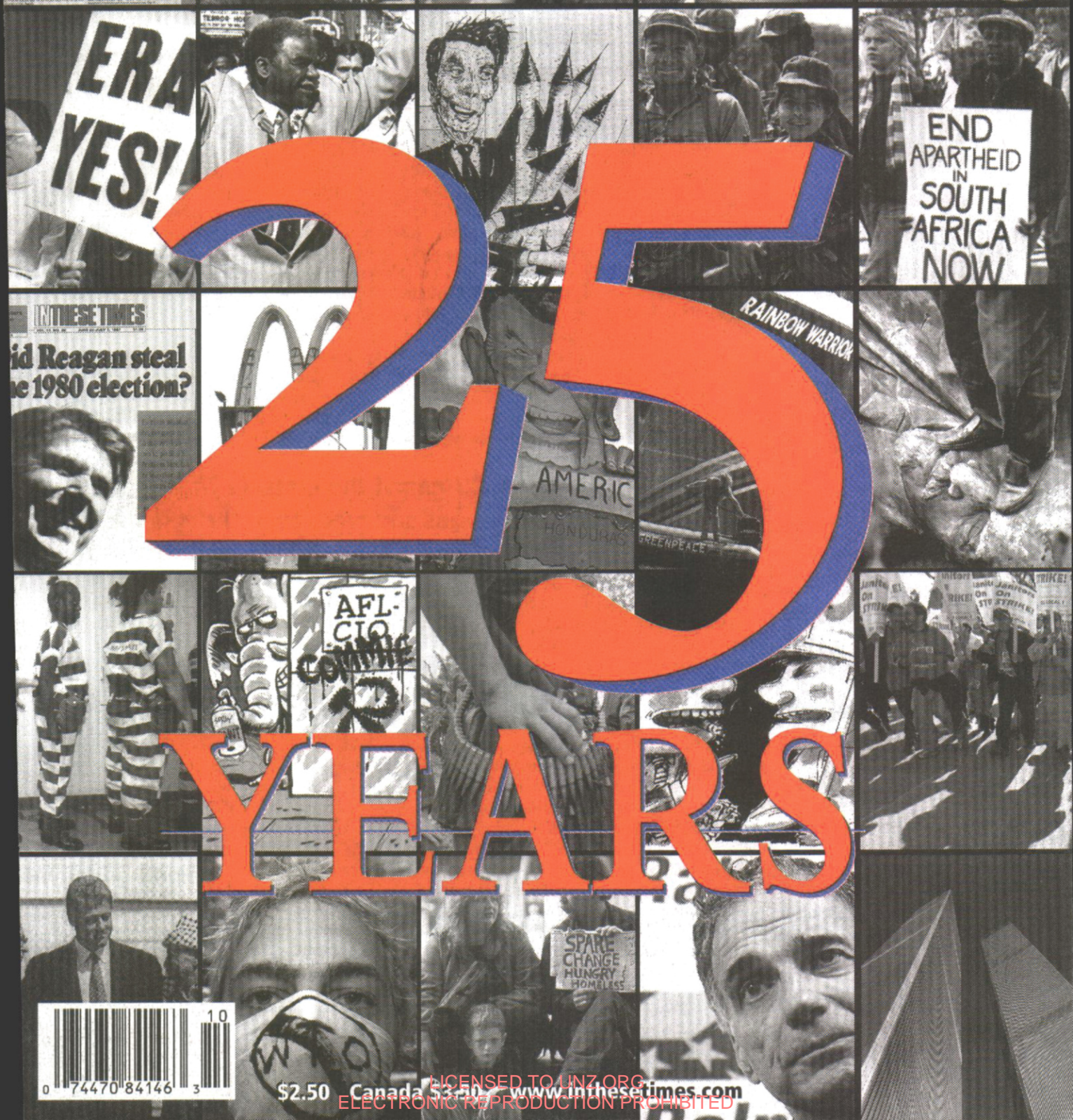
IN THESE TIMES

Politicians
evade the
truth about
North Korea

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

February 18, 2002



IN THESE TIMES

Did Reagan steal
the 1980 election?



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In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

James Weinstein

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Editorial

Appealing to Reason

When James Weinstein moved to Chicago in 1976, he set out to create a fiercely independent journal that would inform, educate and critically analyze an emerging popular movement on the American left. A historian by trade, Weinstein modeled his newspaper on the *Appeal to Reason*, a socialist weekly that boasted more than 750,000 subscribers at its peak around 1912 and featured the writing of Upton Sinclair, Mother Jones and Eugene Victor Debs.

Weinstein's newspaper did resemble the *Appeal*—in its Midwestern sensibilities and populist tone, in its orientation toward the labor movement and electoral politics, in its commitment to avoid sectarianism and foster open debate. And much like the *Appeal*—which challenged the robber barons of the Industrial Revolution—this newspaper was being launched, as Weinstein would recall a few years later, at a time when "Americans were beginning to lose faith, not just in a particular politician or administration, but in the existing system."

When the first issue of *In These Times* appeared on November 15, 1976—just 40 cents for a 24-page tabloid—the staff saw itself at the vanguard of a new majority. As a new new left grew and prospered, they reasoned, so would the newspaper.

Oops. The left didn't grow or prosper. Instead of riding the wave to mass appeal, *In These Times* has struggled to keep its head above water. Yet against the odds—and the newspaper-cum-magazine has been published during some dark days for the American left—*In These Times* has survived, even thrived, for 25 years. How did we make it this far?

Though relatively new to the staff, I feel qualified to answer that question, having spent the better part of the past year editing an essay collection—*Appeal to Reason: The First 25 Years of In These Times* (forthcoming from Seven Stories Press)—to mark the magazine's silver anniversary. I combed through the archives, reading thousands of articles from each of the more than 900 issues we've published over the years. While searching for the best articles to excerpt in the book, I began to understand why—when so many other publications have come and gone—*In These Times* has persevered.

In These Times has never wavered from its essential mission, as Weinstein succinct-

ly put it in the very first editorial, "to speak to corporate capitalism as the great issue of our time." It may no longer be hailed as "the independent socialist newspaper" on the masthead, but *In These Times* has maintained a remarkably consistent worldview and never relinquished its vision of nurturing a viable progressive movement with broad, popular appeal.

This dedication to a pluralistic, pragmatic left has been exemplified in the diversity of our contributors (and readers): socialists and Democrats, liberals and anarchists, journalists and academics, greens and union members, even the occasional conservative or Silicon Valley tycoon. *In These Times* has always committed its limited resources to honest (not objective) journalism, upholding the traditions of its muckraking predecessors, challenging the conventional wisdom, and refusing to follow the agenda of political hacks or PR flacks.

While the magazine has given numerous young writers their first opportunities—and many veteran journalists a chance to write about events and ideas that matter free from ideological constraints—*In These Times* often has been defined by the trio of David

Against the odds, *In These Times* has survived, even thrived, for 25 years. How did we make it this far?

Moberg, Salim Muwakkil and Joel Bleifuss. Their writing has set the high standards for what an *In These Times* story should be: clear, concise, provocative, exhaustively reported.

These are the qualities you'll find in every issue, whether the article is written by old friends—from Pat Aufderheide to G. Pascal Zachary—or newer voices like David Graeber and Naomi Klein. Of course, all of our writers have been aided by a succession of talented, hardworking editors, a creative, resourceful art staff (especially Jim Rinnert, who has been here for more than two decades), and the truly underappreciated business department.

But most importantly, these 25 years would have been impossible without the support of our readers, donors and sustainers. Your loyalty and generosity allow *In These Times* to continue its increasingly important work. Here's to all of you. Happy anniversary.

—Craig Aaron

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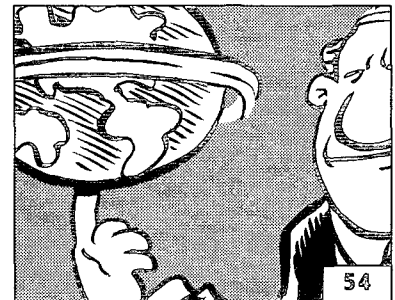
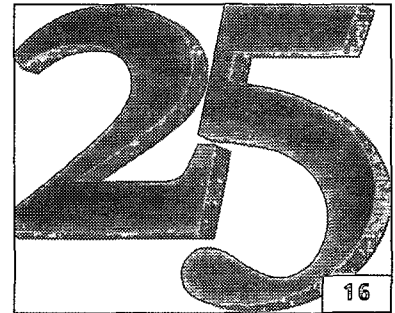
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Letters

Union Ed

It was nice to see that labor leaders are frustrated at times with the lack of democracy in our labor movement ("Better Luck Next Year," January 7). What would really help the development of the movement as a whole would be a comprehensive nationwide training program for rank-and-file union members as well as the leaders themselves. Let's face it, with just staff we will never increase union membership to what it needs to be. If we were to engage the rank and file, it would help greatly.

Right now, though, many members haven't a clue as to why they belong to a union. They know that the corporations they work for have power. What if they realized they could develop their own power and learn how to use it for their families' benefit? Until labor leaders start to think strategically about ways to train and educate their membership, we will continue to see our rank and file mobilized only on election day to help Democrats who will forget us soon after they are in office.

Ed Rothstein
Baltimore

Race and Rights

Alex P. Kellogg notes that those who have challenged the affirmative action programs at Michigan and at other schools have done so based on the belief that "race, like religion, must be placed beyond the reach of the state" ("Racism on Trial," January 7). The majority on the Supreme Court is clearly sympathetic with this view that our Constitution should treat issues arising from differences among individuals of different races in the same way that it treats issues arising from differences among individuals of different religions.

The empirical evidence of discrimination that the supporters of the University of Michigan's affirmative action program plan to use in the upcoming cases cannot possibly win against this argument. The opponents of affirmative action are not arguing that discrimination has not occurred. They are arguing that any attempts to remedy the effects of racial discrimination should be prohibited from using race in any way, because, they claim, the very use of the racial classifications in affirmative action programs is unconstitutionally discriminatory.

To win these cases the proponents of affirmative action need to argue that the use of race as a classification is not unconstitutional. Any other argument is going to lose.

Jim Schmidt
Atlanta

For the Record

While I share some of the concerns about threats to civil liberties expressed by Doug Ireland in "Liberty on the Defensive" (January 21), I must correct an error he made. Ireland claims that I wrote a letter to the Justice Department requesting that AIDS activists Michael Petrelis and David Pasquarelli "be investigated under the USA PATRIOT Act for 'terrorism.'"

I wrote no such letter. In November, at the request of several of my constituents who had received threatening phone calls from Petrelis and Pasquarelli, my office called the FBI to ask it to look into those threatening calls. That was the extent of my involvement.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-California)
San Francisco

Doug Ireland's otherwise excellent article cavalierly states that San Francisco's AIDS czar "has already suggested quarantine for 'promiscuous' HIV-infected men."

A conservative opinion columnist paraphrased Dr. Jeffrey Klausner (who is the director of Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention and Control Services in San Francisco and not an "AIDS czar" at all) as suggesting the quarantine. Klausner has publicly denied any such statement, and the columnist in question admits that he did not directly quote Klausner.

When such a disputed "statement" gets published as fact in solid political publications like yours, it becomes a fact in the minds of your readers—that's a hefty

responsibility when you're writing about such emotionally and politically explosive topics. I encourage you to take the extra moment to check the facts again and make absolutely certain that you want to put the weight of your magazine behind something that may be nothing more than a vicious rumor.

Erin Kissane
Berkeley, California

Lost Moorings

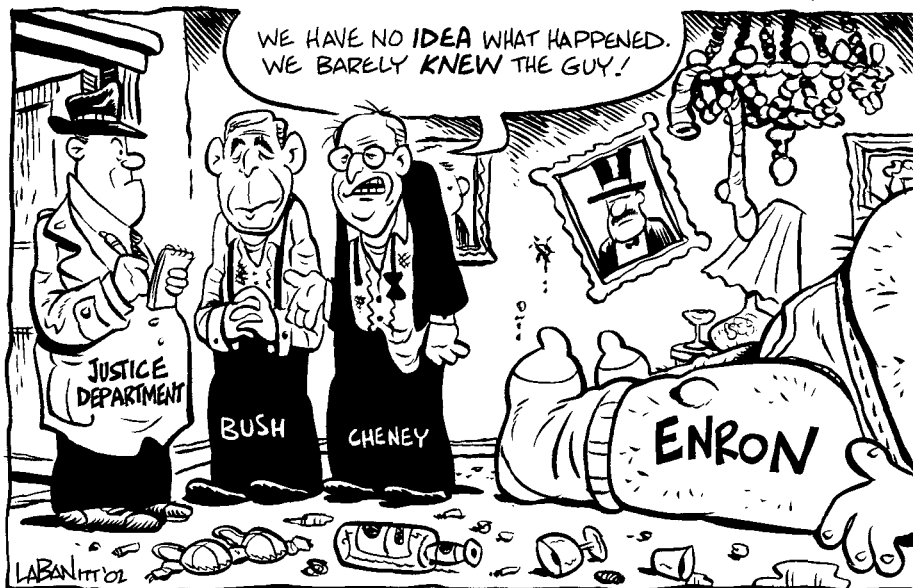
Jitske Hart's assertion that the Netherlands invented tolerance is ludicrous ("Letters," January 21). Precolonial Africans not only were tolerant, but embraced difference; this is one of the reasons they fell to the onslaught of Europe. Hart's claim that the West has done it all is also outrageous. The Portuguese led the West in exploration because they learned everything that they could about navigation from the Moors and Arabs. The number system we use today was brought into Europe by the Moors and was seen in some parts of Europe as a sign of the devil as late as the 17th century. The Moors also had the first lighted and paved city streets in all of Europe in Cordoba, Spain, centuries before any other European city.

Camara Jahi Diop
Collinsville, Virginia

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Terry LaBan



On the Brink

India and Pakistan inch closer to war over Kashmir

By Praful Bidwai

NEW DELHI—As Secretary of State Colin Powell embarks on his second visit to South Asia since September 11, India and Pakistan continue to stand eyeball to eyeball for the second month, with three-quarters of a million troops mobilized at the border between the two nuclear rivals.

India's largest-ever military build-up was launched in response to an attack on December 13 on its Parliament by five men, who New Delhi claims were Pakistan-based "terrorists" connected with two groups, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The attack, in which 14 people were killed, was condemned by governments the world over, including Pakistan.

Like the United States did with September 11, India hyperbolically dubbed the December 13 attack an "act of war" and an "assault" on democracy. And like the United States, it too refuses to make any distinction between terrorists and their supporters and harborers. It demands that Pakistan surrender those whom it has named—a list of 20 "terrorists" it claims are responsible for activities similar to the December 13 attack—or else.

The United States leaned toward India in this confrontation, and in the last week of December placed two groups, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Umma Tameer-i-Nau, on the "foreign terrorist organizations" list. Bush has repeatedly demanded that Pakistan crack down on "terrorist" groups active against India, while British Prime Minister Tony Blair, during a visit in early January, conveyed the same message in tough words to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. The Indian government feels greatly encouraged by the early U.S. statement that it has the right "to act in self-defense" following December 13 and has imposed harsh diplomatic sanctions on Pakistan.

Musharraf, for his part, has cracked down on a number of extremist *jehadi* organizations, freezing bank accounts, sealing offices, and arresting more than 1,600 *jehadi* militants. In a landmark speech on January



An Indian border guard watches a Muslim couple walk away as their house is searched for militants on January 15 in Srinagar, Kashmir.

12, he announced a major "anti-terrorist" policy change and held out substantial concessions to India. New Delhi, however, has refused to de-escalate its military build-up. It wants Islamabad to blink first by surrendering the 20 "terrorists." Powell thus finds himself in the middle, trying to calm extremely frayed nerves in the troubled subcontinent. Yet ironically, India is in some ways only imitating the United States and that other very American example, Israel, in its fight against "terrorism."

For the past month, India has played a game of brinkmanship, steadily ratcheting up military pressure and coercive diplomatic measures against Pakistan. The pressure has largely been exercised through the United States—by frightening Bush with the prospect of a South Asian nuclear confrontation, India implored him to tell Pakistan to take "effective" action against terrorists.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's government persists in the dangerous game of nuclear poker, even though its adversary has announced dramatic, far-reaching changes in its policy on terrorism and violence. In his January 12 speech, Musharraf inaugurated a radical break with Pakistan's two-decades-old policy of Islamization by announcing a plan to sever the links between political Islam and the state, between the military and the *mullahs*, and between Kashmir and terrorist violence. This is perhaps the boldest action since Kemal Atatürk's campaign

in post-Ottoman Turkey to secularize and modernize a Muslim-majority society.

True, Musharraf emphasized the importance of resolving the Kashmir dispute—a sore point with India—and ruled out extraditing Pakistani nationals involved in "terrorism" (who will be dealt with domestically). But he said he would consider an extradition request in regard to non-nationals found in Kashmir. He also offered a dialogue on Kashmir.

India is skeptical of Musharraf's concessions only partly because of past experience. Pakistan has all along claimed it has no military relationship with the militants active in Kashmir, when in reality it has trained and armed them. (It did the same with the Taliban in Afghanistan.)

But there are two other, weightier reasons for India's cold reception to Musharraf's speech. The first is India's resentment at its exclusion from the inner circle of the post-September 11 "anti-terrorist" coalition put together by Washington, to which Pakistan has been central. India today vies with Pakistan to become America's "strategic partner" and "most-allied ally" in South Asia.

The second reason is domestic—related to the trademark politics of Vajpayee's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party. For the BJP, the "anti-terrorism" slogan conveniently diverts attention from its political failures and human rights abuses in Kashmir. It has also become a way to garner Hindu-nationalist votes.

These votes could be crucial to the BJP's electoral gamble in Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, where it faces a make-or-break contest next month. If the BJP loses Uttar Pradesh, its national coalition could be in jeopardy.

India and Pakistan stand at a crossroads. Vajpayee must choose between short-term, uncertain domestic gains or abiding peace and reconciliation with Pakistan. The first means continued vassal-like dependence on Washington, which is now building military bases in Pakistan. The second could open up rich new possibilities for a peaceful South Asia, which could return to long-neglected social agendas like fighting poverty and illiteracy.

The United States too must decide if it will set a negative, militaristic example for South Asia and exploit the India-Pakistan rivalry or, alternatively, play a modest, useful role by counseling restraint and de-escalation and encouraging a dialogue on Kashmir. ■

No Relief Behind Argentina's economic meltdown

By David Moberg

There are two simple questions that can help unravel the complexities of Argentina's current economic crisis: Who profited from it? And who paid for it?

The answer to those questions might start in 1976, when the military seized power in Argentina. Over the next eight years, the country's foreign debt soared nearly six-fold, to \$46 billion. Much of that represented the illegal conversion of private debt from many companies—including dozens of multinational corporations and banks, such as Citibank, Cargill, Fiat and IBM—into the public debt of the Argentine government to aid private investors. According to research by Jubilee Plus (formerly Jubilee 2000), a movement for debt relief for the world's poorest countries, the government later borrowed from the International Monetary Fund to service the debt. Then many of the beneficiaries took charge of extracting repayment. The government's 1992 financial plan for Argentina, Jubilee



Alejandra Palacios, 43, calls for politicians to stop robbing during a demonstration in January in Buenos Aires.

Plus reports, was drawn up by the J. P. Morgan bank at the request of the government, and the public debt was administered for several years by a group of foreign private banks, led by Citibank.

During the '80s, the military government was unable to service the rising debt, leading to rampant inflation. So, in 1991, the government of Carlos Menem pegged the peso's value to the U.S. dollar. While this policy is widely credited with both reducing inflation and—later in the decade—contributing to the ruin of the Argentine economy, it was only part of the problem. The Argentine government also privatized government companies and utilities (such as water, the postal service, oil, airlines, telephones, electricity and other services), ended capital controls, privatized social security, opened the economy—including the banking system—to foreign investment, reduced trade barriers, and committed itself to balanced budgets—all policies that were either encouraged or ordered by the IMF.

As a result, Argentina saw a huge influx of foreign capital: Foreign interests now control 75 percent of the banking system (up from 14 percent in 1989) and 40 percent of the nation's industry, while at the same time the deregulated, internationalized banking system facilitated the flight of an estimated \$120 billion belonging to rich Argentines. The privatization process shortchanged the government and was a fount of corruption, allegedly including many members of former President Menem's family,

according to a report by Jubilee Plus Director Ann Pettifor on how foreign creditors—both the IMF and private banks—contributed to the current crisis.

The much heralded Argentine plan was deeply flawed from the start, but the global financial crisis that started in Thailand in 1997 and spread to Russia, Brazil and elsewhere sped its collapse. Foreign capital retreated from emerging markets like Argentina, and the economy tanked, decreasing government revenues.

But the biggest budget problems were more endemic. Few rich people in Argentina pay their taxes, and even though Argentina's budget deficit was well below standards acceptable in Europe and the United States, the IMF—as a condition of loans made to help pay off earlier debts—insisted on a balanced budget. Beyond the immediate hardships of lost jobs and public services, this strategy worsened the recession, further cutting revenue. The government borrowed more heavily from both banks and the IMF, while the banks raised their interest rates dramatically as the situation deteriorated, worsening the country's plight.

Yet during the years multinational banks, corporations and the Argentine elite have prospered, working people and the middle class have paid dearly. By the year 2000, wages were worth 30 percent of what they were in 1975. Unemployment is now over 20 percent. The number of people in poverty rose from 1 million to 14 million (out of 37 million). Over the coming year, Argentina owes foreign debt

QUINCE KIRSCHENBAUM/GETTY IMAGES

payments equal to more than one-fourth its gross domestic product and more than triple its annual export earnings. The banks and the IMF will insist on repaying that debt, enriching those who have already profited by further squeezing those who have already paid. But the blood has already been drained from that stone—and it is being thrown back by angry crowds, led by the unemployed.

Despite President Eduardo Duhalde's modest efforts to protect the middle class and impose some costs on banks and multinationals, the only solution that offers any hope to revive the economy for average Argentines is cancellation of most of the external debt. Argentina could repudiate the debt on its own or, better yet, it could unite with other debtor countries to demand cancellation. Another option, recommended by Jubilee Plus, would be for a new international debtor court, with a voice for the people, to work out a bankruptcy agreement. But for long-term financial health, beyond the debt trap, Argentina must free itself from the grip of both free-market fundamentalist policy and the global financial powers that have plundered the country and driven it into its current crisis. ■

Hob-nobbing at Ground Zero

The World Economic Forum is coming to New York

By Geov Parrish

It's no surprise that after two years of escalating confrontations, the roaming road show of trade summits and global justice protesters would eventually land in New York City. But nobody thought it would look like this.

The World Economic Forum—a 30-year-old organization supported by more than 1,000 major corporations—usually holds annual meetings in the luxury resort of Davos, Switzerland. This year, however, as a show of solidarity, the WEF is making a post-September 11 pilgrimage to New York for meetings from January 31 to February 4. This is the first time the WEF has held a full meeting outside Davos; about 1,000 corporate executives, 250 politicians, 20 heads of state, and 1,000 or so other notables will converge on the Waldorf

Astoria. And, undoubtedly kept at a distance, so will the protest movement that has helped turned Davos into a war zone for the WEF's last several annual gatherings.

The New York protests will be the first major test of the strength of North America's global justice movement since last September's massive anti-World Bank/IMF protests in Washington were cancelled in the wake of September 11. It's hard to imagine worse circumstances. Rhetoric about causing capitalism to collapse somehow seems creepier when the remnants of the World Trade Center are just blocks away. Even more so than in past protests, the local public and media mood is likely to be hostile.

Organizers seem undeterred. Eric Laursen of the protest umbrella group Another World Is Possible (and an occasional *In These Times* contributor) predicts "tens of thousands" will assemble from across North America to protest the WEF and its series of workshops and networking meetings and parties. Student activists plan a two-day conference from January 31 to February 1, after which they will join the direct action crowd for a legally permitted rally (10 a.m., February 2) and, throughout the weekend, the seemingly

Librarian Saves Stupid White Men

Filmmaker and author Michael Moore's forthcoming book, *Stupid White Men and Other Excuses for the State of the Nation*, had a near brush with cancellation and pulping in December. Shortly after September 11, Moore's publisher, HarperCollins, informed him that they would be canceling the book tour and putting the book on hold for a short time. The publisher also requested he change the title and add material about the September attacks. To all these requests, Moore agreed. But then the Rupert Murdoch-owned HarperCollins informed him he'd have to rewrite entire sections of the book—even though it was sitting, already printed, in a warehouse in Pennsylvania—and contribute \$100,000 from his royalties to defray the cost of pulping the old edition and reprinting the new one.

In December, Moore described this state of affairs to a New Jersey Citizen Action meeting at which he was keynote speaker. He requested they take no action, saying he was pursuing as many avenues as possible to resolve the situation, but one member of the audience—a librarian—decided to speak out anyway. Ann Sparanese from the Englewood Public Library in New Jersey wrote an angry letter and posted it on several library listserves. "As librarians," she wrote, "it seems we are obligated to follow this up, find out some more, and make a response."

Within days, the publisher began receiving e-mails from Sparanese's outraged colleagues. Though they deny the e-mails had anything to do with their decision, HarperCollins

soon reinstated the book, with an in-stores date of March 2002. "This is a fascinating story because it shows what a free society does when confronted with a crisis," Moore told *Salon*. "Do we maintain our sense of freedom and liberty and dissent and open discussion of the issues? Or do we start putting the clamp down? I waited it out to see. And HarperCollins eventually did the right thing."

Recess Appointments

In January, President Bush took advantage of the Senate recess to install two extremely controversial appointees, Eugene Scalia and Otto Reich, to top positions in the Labor and State departments, respectively. Reich is infamous for his role as chief propagandist for the covert U.S. war in Central America (see "Yikes, it's Otto Reich!" April 16, 2001). Lately a corporate lobbyist for the likes of Bacardi, British American Tobacco and Lockheed Martin, he will now be assistant secretary of state for Latin America and the chief U.S. diplomat in the region. Scalia, the son of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, has made a name for himself bashing worker safety as a private attorney. Yet—over the loud objections of the AFL-CIO—he'll now be the third-highest ranking official in the Labor Department, responsible for enforcing close to 200 labor laws, including worker safety. Without Senate approval, however, they will remain in the positions only until the end of the year, rather than for the full term of the Bush administration.

—Kristie Reilly

inevitable "diversity of tactics" called for as part of an "Anti-Capitalist Convergence."

Notably missing from the list of endorsing groups for the protests are almost all mainstream global justice, environmental and labor groups—even though, four months ago, support of such groups for the planned protests in D.C. was extensive and New York, as home of the United Nations, is crawling with NGOs.

Most of those groups will instead be in Porto Alegre, Brazil during the WEF meetings. For the second year, the World Social Forum (WSF) will convene talks there intended to parallel the WEF. As a meeting hosted by, in, and for the Third World, the WSF focuses on developing alternative visions for more positive economic and social policies throughout the world.

It's undeniable that those efforts would not be nearly so visible in the North without the succession of summit street protests that have circled the world since Seattle's 1999 WTO meetings. But 2002 is very different from 1999, and New York, in particular, is not the same place.

Even some sympathetic long-time activists have doubts about the wisdom of radical street protest in these conditions.

Says one such skeptic, who lives in New York, "I don't see any possible positive outcome to it. ... I just don't see the wisdom. This action is a continuation of a political logic that is now outdated and inappropriate"—not, she says, because the issues have changed or become less urgent, but because the political and cultural climate has changed. "If the anarchists wear balaclavas, the cops won't beat them up. The public will."

Conversely, it's hard to imagine that the WEF could hold a meeting in New York at any time and not have protests—let alone now, when the city's finances as well as the Twin Towers are in ruins. Organizers are attempting to rally public support by calling on the city to spend money on disaster relief and economic assistance, not on the WEF meetings. And at least one group, Reclaim the Streets, is hoping to finesse the awkwardness through humor: an invitation to activists to dress up in "rich per-

son" drag and attend a "Dance Upon the Ruins of the World." (The dance, specifically, will be the Argentine Tango.)

Regardless of their size, larger or smaller than expected, the New York protests may not be a fair measure of the ongoing strength of North America's global justice movement post-9/11. Meanwhile, in Brazil—away from the cameras and newscasts—the task of designing a better world will continue. ■

Under the Radar

Bush quietly thwarts environmental regulations

By Gene J. Koprowski

While President Bush has made the Afghan war his public focus, his administration has been continuing its campaign of deregulation on behalf of its big business buddies.

Sharia Lite 7.8

With the zealots in hiding, Afghanistan now returns to a seamy normalcy. In Kandahar, Pashtun big shots may again stroll the streets with their rent boys, while in the hinterlands peasants dream of the coming year's poppy harvest. Afghan malefactors still face the sanctions of *sharia*, the Islamic law, but with all sorts of loopholes.

Ahamat Ullha Zarif, a prominent Afghan judge, explained that adulterers will still be stoned to death, as dictated by *sharia*, but they will be given a sporting chance to get away. "We will use only small stones," he told Agence France Press. "If they are able to run away, they are free."

Other signs of enlightenment? "The Taliban used to hang the victim's body in public for four days," Zarif said. "We will only hang the body for a short time, say, 15 minutes."

No Children of the Corn 5.6

Here's a biological train wreck in the making. According to the *Observer*, a San Diego-based company has developed a contraceptive strain of genetically modified corn. Building on research into a rare con-

dition known as immune infertility, scientists at Epicyte have isolated a gene that regulates human antibodies that attack sperm. Naturally, the next logical step was to create an array of Frankencorns embedded with the genes.

A Toss Before Dying 1.3

It is the sincerest wish of every 15-year-old boy. And when an Australian youngster invoked the prerogative of the deathbed to get it, debate broke out nationwide. Should a minor with terminal cancer, it was wondered, be allowed to know the pleasures of the flesh before departing this vale of tears? And if he were to seek such pleasures with a woman, his senior—a prostitute, for example—should that woman be prosecuted for violating laws protecting the innocence of such lads?

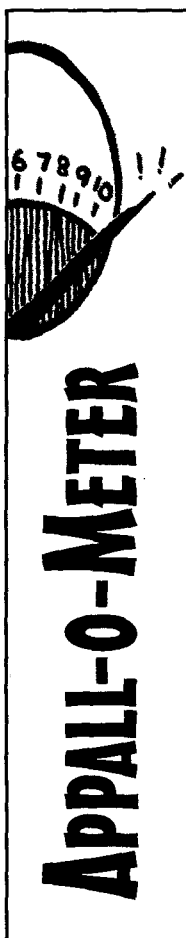
According to the *National Post*, hospital staffers wanted to pass a hat to hire a prostitute for Jack (as the boy is known in the Australian press). They chose not to, in light

of possible legal consequences, but a bunch of Jack's friends arranged a fine send-off for him behind the backs of his parents and doctors. While medical ethicists parse the ethical antinomies of his case, Jack has gone off to answer to a higher authority.

Go Hun, Go! 2.5

"If we know of any karaoke parlor still open, go to close it immediately and take tanks to knock it down," Prime Minister Hun Sen ordered a military commander in a recent speech broadcast on Cambodian state radio.

What dictators can do, we can only dream of.



Rather than publicly rolling back regulations—as Bush did soon after taking power with ergonomics rules and, less successfully, with arsenic levels in drinking water—the White House is adopting a posture of bureaucratic inaction and apathy toward already established rules.

Some regulations, like those intended by the Clinton administration to curb logging on federal lands, are simply not being enforced. Others, like those that protect wetlands, were revised by Bush's regulators, who claimed they were unfair to developers. "It's bureaucratic sleight-of-hand," says Bill Curtiss, the senior director of programs at Earthjustice, a San Francisco-based public interest law firm. "They claim the old rules are not effective and propose new ones to replace them. In the meantime, nothing gets done."

Much of this maneuvering is clearly intended to assuage the business interests that supported Bush heavily during the last election. "Changing the federal regulatory process has been an ongoing project for conservatives," says Scott Lavin, a New York attorney with Barton, Barton & Plotkin, who tracks government rules and works on regulatory issues for clients. "This goes back to the Reagan administration. Federal agencies are authorized to issue regulations by their enabling statutes. There are more than 100 federal agencies subject to the president's direction and control. ... Modifying rules is a back-door way to do battle with the Clinton administration, just as Reagan had back-door battles against earlier Democratic presidencies."

During the past few months, there have been important regulatory decisions that have gone unnoticed by the general public and uncovered by the press. For example, late in the Clinton administration, new rules were implemented under the Clean Water Act to reduce the amount of pollutants that agri-businesses and logging companies can dump into water. But the Bush administration has delayed implementation of the rule until 2003, pending a more business-friendly revision.

A new permit program for building on wetlands, administered by the Army Corps of Engineers, is also being challenged by Bush. The administration has issued a draft revision of the permit program regulations that progressives fear inhibits wetlands protection. The American Road and Transport Builders Association, among other trade groups, has been lobbying against

these rules since the Bush transition.

Mining regulations too have been under siege. According to the most recent EPA survey of toxic pollution, 17 of the top 20 polluters in the United States are mining companies. Yet the Bush administration has suspended rules that would require metal miners to control their discharges into waters near their facilities.

And water quality and wetlands aren't the only environmental regulations being impacted. Back in 1998, the Clinton administration began reviewing the road-building policy within the national forest system—198 million acres of publicly owned land. Before leaving office, Clinton issued protections for 60 million acres, indicating that no new roads could be built on them. Curtiss claims that the administration is working—tacitly—with industry to keep this regulation from ever taking effect. "It's a sort of familiar pattern," he says. "There's an industry lawsuit against an environmentally improved rule. That provides cover for the administration to retreat from the rule, under the guise of working out a settlement."

In this instance, plaintiffs include Boise Cascade and several timber industry associations, various off-road vehicle groups

and livestock companies, the Kootenai Tribe, Boise County, and the states of Alaska, Idaho and Utah. They want the road building to continue for business reasons—that is, access to lumber.

The administration is working to avoid public scrutiny of its actions. Vice President Dick Cheney held closed-door meetings over the summer with industry leaders to discuss the White House response to the California energy crisis. When the White House refused to release a list of the participants in the meeting, the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, threatened to sue. Since September 11, however, the GAO has retreated from its demands. In the meantime, the administration has met privately with leaders from pre-collapse Enron and other major energy companies, suggesting that the behind-the-scenes campaign is continuing unabated.

There is little opponents can do to stop these White House tactics. According to Curtiss, it is too early for progressives to go to court. "Thus far, they've only been postponing rules from being implemented and proposing new ones," he says. "Until the final new rules are approved, we have nothing to litigate. This could go on for years." ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THIS WEEK: YOUR COMPREHENSIVE CARTOON GUIDE TO THE ENRON COLLAPSE!

EVERYTHING* YOU NEED TO KNOW IN FIVE EASY PANELS!

*AS DEFINED BY CARTOONIST AND SUBJECT TO LIMITATIONS OF AVAILABLE SPACE. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. COMPREHENSION MAY VARY.

1. NEW ECONOMY HYPE

BEFORE INVESTING IN COMPANIES CLAIMING TO SPIN STRAW INTO GOLD... YOU MIGHT WANT TO MAKE SURE THEY AT LEAST HAVE SOME STRAW.

OUR REVENUE MODEL IS MUCH TOO COMPLICATED TO EXPLAIN!

NO PROBLEM! I'LL TAKE A THOUSAND SHARES!

2. DEREGULATION MANIA

OOPS! AS IT TURNS OUT, CORPORATIONS CAN'T ALWAYS BE TRUSTED TO POLICE THEMSELVES. WHO KNEW?!

SO WE OVERSTATED OUR VALUE BY \$600 MILLION. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

YOU NEVER MADE A MISTAKE BALANCING YOUR CHECKBOOK?

3. THE REVOLVING DOOR

IN 1993, WHILE WORKING FOR AN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION, WENDY GRAMM (WIFE OF PHIL) HELPED EXEMPT ENRON FROM REGULATIONS. FIVE WEEKS LATER—COINCIDENTALLY ENOUGH—SHE JOINED ENRON'S BOARD.

WHAT AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF EVENTS!

IT'S CERTAINLY FUNNY HOW LIFE WORKS OUT SOMETIMES!

4. MONEY-N-POLITICS

ENRON WAS A MAJOR BUSH CONTRIBUTOR. NUMEROUS BUSHIES ARE FORMER ENRON EXECUTIVES AND/OR SHAREHOLDERS. AND ENRON CEO KEN LAY WAS A KEY PLAYER ON DICK CHENEY'S SECRETIVE ENERGY TASK FORCE. YOU FIGURE IT OUT.

YOUR COUNTRY APPRECIATES YOUR SERVICE, KEN!

JUST DOING MY PATRIOTIC DUTY, MR. VICE PRESIDENT!

5. POLITICAL RELATIVISM

EXECUTIVES WALKED AWAY WITH MILLIONS. SHAREHOLDERS GOT THE SHAFT. IF THIS HAD HAPPENED UNDER A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION, THE SPECIAL PROSECUTORS WOULD BE LINED UP DOWN THE BLOCK BY NOW.

WELL, WE CAN'T AFFORD A DIVISIVE INVESTIGATION DURING WARTIME!

AND SINCE WAR ON TERROR IS SCHEDULED TO LAST INDEFINITELY--

--YOU GET THE IDEA.

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Private Schooling

Edison Inc. bids to take over Philadelphia education

By Dave Lindorff

PHILADELPHIA—Johnny and Janey can't read or do basic math in Philadelphia, the nation's fifth-largest metropolitan school district. No dispute there.

But whether a dramatic new approach—the takeover starting in January of the entire 200,000-student school district by the state, the dissolution of the elected school board, and the hiring of Edison Schools Inc., a corporate school management company, to run many of the district's schools—will teach them any better than the old system is much less clear.

Whether it's the right solution or not, a solution is clearly needed. Philadelphia may not be the worst urban school district in the nation, but for many of the district's frustrated parents, it might as well be. Test scores are abysmal, and class sizes are a wildly unmanageable 33 students per teacher. Pennsylvania ranks near the bottom in the percentage of state funding provided to local school districts (about 37 percent of Pennsylvania school funding comes from state revenues, compared with a national average of 50 percent). As a result, students who live in wealthier suburban districts have vastly better-funded schools.

Under the state takeover plan worked out in December between acting Gov. Mark Schweiker and Philadelphia Mayor John Street, the Philadelphia district will be run for the state by a so-called School Reform Commission—a five-member appointed body, including Chairman James E. Nevels. The state's initial focus on more money to pay for privatization, as well as appointments of politically connected consultants without any open bidding process by Nevels, a 49-year-old African-American investment manager, suggests that the takeover may turn out to be more business as usual—leaving Johnny and Janey with the same poor schools they already had.

The proposed Edison takeover set off a wave of angry protests. Community, student and parent groups were particu-



Protesters at a student walkout on December 18 in Philadelphia.

larly outraged that the state had hired Edison to conduct a \$2.7-million study of the district at the same time the company was being considered to run it.

After a number of protests in the fall, including several sit-ins by a student organization, the Philadelphia Student Union, the state retreated. Prior to the protests, it had looked as if Edison would simply be handed the new job running the district. Now its role is likely to be more circumscribed.

But that role is still murky, because most decisions concerning the company are being made behind closed doors in meetings between the mayor's and governor's offices and the new commission. Under the takeover plan, between 45 and 60 of the district's 245 schools will be run by private management companies, in cooperation with community groups of parents, students and teachers.

Edison is likely to be the manager selected for all or most of those schools, but, given Edison's heavy involvement in the early stages of the takeover and its political connections in Harrisburg, it could also end up as a primary management consultant for the commission. As Philadelphia Student Union director Eric Braxton says, even after the protests and the state's subsequent retreat, "Edison could still end up calling the shots in running the district."

The takeover of such a large district by state authorities may be unprecedented, but the idea of turning to corporate man-

agers to run a school district, or a bunch of troubled schools, is part of a national trend. Hundreds of schools across the country—especially charter schools—are already being run by for-profit managers or management firms.

School management companies like Edison make money off public schools by keeping a tight grip on costs. Typically, when a school district hires a management company, the district provides it with a negotiated budget to run the schools. If the company comes in under budget at year's end, it gets to pocket what it saves.

In Philadelphia, the main problem is that, whoever runs this giant school system, there seems little will to provide a significant increase in funding to a district that is largely composed of poor and minority students in a state that is largely suburban, rural and white. There are no plans, under the state takeover, to significantly increase the number of teachers or to build additional classrooms or schools.

Even now that the state and city have agreed, as part of the final takeover plan, to cough up another \$120 million a year for the struggling \$1.7-billion district, there is simmering resentment among parents, students and teachers that a big chunk of that new money (perhaps even all of it) could simply end up going to Edison. "The state is finally willing to give the district new money," Braxton says, "but only when most of it is going to go to Edison and the governor's other friends." ■

Freedom Fighter

By Jamie Pietras

CHICAGO—Kathleen Zellner's got a cure for everything from medical negligence to irresponsible property management: It comes in one hefty shot to the wallet. The civil and criminal attorney is perhaps Chicago's biggest advocate for financial punishment. In March 1999, she won the largest-ever sexual assault verdict in Illinois, \$2.2 million, after suing the management of the Chicago Bar Association building on behalf of a client who was raped there. Four months later, she won a \$6.5 million medical malpractice verdict against an Illinois hospital that denied admission to a woman who later committed suicide.

Thankfully, Zellner also has a penchant for picking fights on behalf of the wrongfully convicted. Using the same formidable research techniques that have proven so successful in the civil suits, Zellner has won the freedom of seven wrongfully convicted men in the past seven years.

Take Omar Saunders and cousins Larry and Calvin Ollins, who took their first free breaths as adults on December 5. Wrongfully convicted as teenagers along with another man, Marcellus Bradford, for the rape and murder of Rush University Medical School student Lori Roscetti, the three men had served 15 years in prison for a crime they did not commit.

In 1987, Saunders, the Ollins cousins and Bradford were arrested and accused of Roscetti's murder. At the trial, the four men were convicted based on the confessions of Bradford and Calvin Ollins.

Zellner says those confessions were beaten out of Bradford and coaxed out of 14-year-old Calvin Ollins under the pretense that he'd be allowed to go home. Even more insidious, Zellner says, their statements were actually handwritten by police on yellow legal pads, who devised the hypotheses after talking to an FBI profiler. "He's stripped and hooked to the wall," as Zellner describes Bradford's interrogation. "Then both cops come in. One of them puts on gloves and they just start beating. ... Then they take him, they polygraph him and tell him he flunked. They bring him back, they dump a bucket of mop water over him, dirty mop water, and they're telling him they're going to kill him."

The three men were just teens when a Cook County judge handed each of them life sentences. Bradford, who pled guilty, served six years of a 12-year sentence.

In 2000, Zellner took on the case, and within a year, the prosecution's case against the men had fallen apart. In a report commissioned by Zellner, noted forensic scientist Edward Blake said research by the Illinois State Police crime lab, used as evidence in the 1988 trial as well as eight other cases, amounted to "scientific fraud." Bradford admitted he lied at the trial, and additional witnesses came forward to say they, too, had implicated the four men during the trial to protect themselves. Finally, a series of DNA tests on hair and semen exonerated the victims.

But even as the case began to crumble, Chicago police officials still clung to their account of what happened. They said it was a "smash and grab" though she didn't seem to be missing any money. They said Roscetti was hijacked and attacked in her car, though her injuries indicated she was probably just transported in the vehicle. "No police officer would have made up the story of what they did to her prior to her death and after her head was crushed," Chicago Police Deputy Chief James Maurer told the *Chicago Sun-Times* in June. "Stephen King does not even write that stuff."

But the question of who does lingers, because by the time Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine announced he was seeking a dismissal of the case, no evidence against the men remained. On December 4, a judge voided their convictions. Zellner plans to file a lawsuit over the city and county's handling of the case. This time, she says, "I

would say [the settlement] could go anywhere from \$1 million to \$5 or \$6 million."

Though she's reaped the kind of criminal defense success it would take most a lifetime to achieve, Zellner's career runs the gamut. Before starting her own practice in 1990, she worked as a medical malpractice defense attorney for hospitals and insurance companies. In 1999, she began concentrating on civil cases, developing a specialty in sexual assault and women's health suits alongside the malpractice suits that make up the larger part of her practice. All the while, she has continued her hobby of getting innocent men out of jail.

The string of victories began in 1994 with Death Row inmate Joseph Burrows: Zellner persuaded the real killer to confess, and Burrows was released. In 1997, Billy Wardell and Donald Reynolds were cleared of wrongdoing after DNA testing revealed they were innocent of the rape and robbery of two University of Chicago students; they had served nine years of their 55-year sentences. Now, in the wake of the highly publicized Roscetti decision, Zellner is at work on two more cases she believes are the result of false confessions.

Zellner's only regret is that she can take on only a few of the criminal and civil cases she is contacted about. An encyclopedia-high stack of letters, some of them handwritten and bearing the sterile return stamp of state penitentiaries, rests atop a stately wooden desk in the rear of her office. "There are other innocent people in there that have approached me, we've examined their cases, and there isn't anything we can do," she concedes. Unfortunate factors, like irreversible attorney errors, can compound inmates' dilemmas. "There are about five of them that we feel from our re-investigation are innocent, and we can't help them."

Zellner sees herself as part of a new breed of legal reformers, not unlike the attorneys who won big with product liability cases in the late '70s and early '80s. "That's how I feel, like the Ralph Nader of the criminal world," she says. "When you get very large verdicts, then products no longer malfunction, cars don't blow up and ... eventually, I think, if there are large verdicts, they will start cracking down on the police." ■



The Real Toy Story

By Susan J. Douglas

As I sit in my living room one evening, sipping a fine \$3.99 bottle of Nigerian Chardonnay, I survey the scene before me. Three half-eaten bags of sweet tarts, a soccer shin guard and a crushed juice box grace the coffee table, as do 117 Pokemon cards and a Hefty bag overflowing with Beanie Babies. A few plastic toys that accompanied a Happy Meal lie on the floor, to be chewed on by the dogs at their leisure.

Then I do what no parent should ever do. I walk into my kid's room. Well, into may be an overstatement. There is so much crap on the floor, I can't really get in. Despite my near-daily rants about the spiraling hyper-commercialism of our culture, I'm still a pathetic sucker who has succumbed to the blandishments of my kid (and thus the media touts hawking to her) and bought this crap. As a woman, and especially as a mother, I'm supposed to blame myself for this excess. And I do. But let's also stand back and review how corporate America has made this a very tough battle for parents to fight, let alone win.

Children have, of course, been marketed to throughout the 20th century. But as mothers went back to work in unprecedented numbers beginning in the late '70s, the toy corporations figured out how to profit from their guilt: Get them to buy more toys, especially those pitched as "educational."

In 1980, the toy business was a \$5 billion industry; by 1992 it had more than doubled to \$13.5 billion. The increased onslaught of toy marketing began with the mega-stores, in which guys like Charles Lazarus, founder and CEO of Toys "R" Us, applied the techniques of the supermarket chain to toy stores. As Lazarus put it: "When I realized that toys broke ... I knew it was a good business."

In 1968, Toys "R" Us had four stores. By 1982, there were 120 of these gendered houses of horrors, in which the girls' aisles are bright pink and the boys' camouflage brown. Today they number 1,450, each offering 18,000 different items for sale.

No longer does some toy company say, "Hey, this seems like a cool game," and put it on the market. In the '80s, the toy industry adopted sophisticated research techniques. Children were divided into smaller and smaller niches to be studied—infants, preschoolers, tweens and so forth. Hasbro spent \$8.8 million on R&D in



1983, a 40 percent increase over the previous year.

Today there's tons of "upfront" work before a toy ever gets a berth at Toys "R" Us. First there might be focus groups using kids as young as five to find out what they want to play with. Then prototypes are developed. Next, through two-way mirrors, researchers watch and videotape how—and whether—the kids play with the toy. The way the kids play with the toy determines how the company advertises it on TV. Nothing is left to chance.

And let's not forget every parent's best friend, the Reagan administration, which deregulated everything related to kids that it could. In 1970, the Federal Communications Commission had warned broadcasters against airing shows based on toys because they were, in fact, program-length commercials. Similarly, the Federal Trade Commission in 1971 forbade toy companies from using camera techniques such as slow-motion, freeze-frames or stroboscopic lights to make their toys look way cooler than they really were. Reagan's FCC and FTC eliminated these regulations.

Guess what happened?

Between 1983 and 1985, the number of toy-based TV shows jumped

from 14 to 40. This was all just the beginning of what was to evolve into the current onslaught of cross-promotion and cross-marketing campaigns aimed at our kids, where *Stars Wars* characters or Harry Potter appear in Happy Meals, or where Nickelodeon's *Rugrats* dolls are prominently displayed in Blockbuster when a new *Rugrats* movie is out because Nickelodeon and Blockbuster are both owned by Viacom.

This marketing juggernaut bombards our kids with one consistent message: Buying equals loving. In 1999, the annual disposable income of American children ages 12 and under was estimated at \$27.5 billion, but they supposedly influenced (e.g., through nagging) anywhere from \$200 to \$500 billion in adult spending. Consequently, advertising targeted to children grew at 15 to 20 percent a year in the mid- and late '90s.

If you feel like you are besieged in ways your parents were not, you're right. Of course, it's the upscale kid who's most in demand. The goal now is to introduce our kids to conspicuous consumption as soon as the cord is cut. On *InStyle Celebrity Moms*, which aired last April, Cindy Crawford introduced viewers to the new designer lines for infants and toddlers so we could see "what Hollywood's next generation is wearing." "It's never too early to start looking good," the voiceover told us as we saw an infant crawling around in his new "baby biker" leather jacket from Gucci.

The marketing juggernaut bombards kids with one consistent message: Buying equals loving.

Looking good indeed. It's not just that these corporations want to turn our kids into buying machines by the time they're 2. More importantly, they tutor our kids in the fine art of turning themselves into commodities, which they must then sell successfully to others. And that's a much more pernicious message to challenge than a request for another Game Boy. ■

Back on the Air at Pacifica

By Juan Gonzalez

A growing movement to make the American mass media more accountable to the public they are supposed to serve has won an enormous victory.

At a three-day meeting on January 11 to 13, which drew hundreds of political activists and radio producers from throughout the nation, a newly installed interim board of directors of the five-station Pacifica Radio network ordered the reinstatement of nearly 40 producers who had been fired during a political struggle that consumed the network. The new board also immediately replaced several key executives who had sought to transform the 50-year-old progressive radio network into a mini-version of National Public Radio.

A year ago, as readers of this column know, I resigned as co-host of *Democracy Now!*, Pacifica's daily morning news show, to protest repeated acts of censorship at the network and a rash of unjustified firings at WBAI, the network's New York flagship. I broadcast my resignation on-air, announcing that I was joining those fired workers and thousands of Pacifica listeners around the country in a national campaign to boycott the network until the board of directors and the Pacifica executives who were responsible for those policies had been removed.

Journalists are normally expected just to report the news. But when your own employer engages in flagrant censorship, illegal acts and political purges, each of us must choose between keeping quiet and collaborating or exposing those acts and resisting.

As the country's oldest and largest listener-sponsored community radio network, Pacifica depends on the generous contributions of its listeners for more than 80 percent of its \$12 million annual budget. If the listeners could be convinced to halt their donations, we figured it was possible to force the network into crisis.

Since its founding by American pacifists after World War II, Pacifica has had a reputation as a broadcast outlet where unpopular and radical views could always be heard. While some of its programming was occasionally strident and one-sided,

its best reporters often broke critical stories ignored by the corporate media.

As the power and influence of the mass media expanded in recent decades, the tiny Pacifica network, with stations in five of the biggest radio markets in the country (New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington and the San Francisco Bay Area), also grew in value.



With the stations estimated to be worth as much as \$500 million on the open market, Pacifica is arguably the single most valuable asset of the American left.

Several years ago, a new group of directors took control of the Pacifica Foundation, the nonprofit entity that runs the stations. The new board promptly did away with the autonomy of the five stations and eliminated any role for listeners who had participated in long-standing community advisory boards. The executives installed by the national board began redirecting the programming toward a more mainstream audience and firing or censoring anyone who opposed those changes.

These actions led to several lawsuits by listeners, dissident board members, and the network's local advisory boards. But not until listeners openly rebelled through a national boycott that began in February 2001 did the tide begin to turn. The network lost hundreds of thousands of dollars because of the boycott. Picketing outside each of the stations became commonplace, and board members and top network executives found themselves flooded with phone calls and e-mails, even protests outside their jobs and homes demanding their resignations.

As the mass movement around Pacifica spread, many of us were surprised at how some prominent individuals on the left, even some of the country's most

respected left publications, sought to steer a neutral course above the fray, or even backed the policies of the national board. It is always easier to expose injustices that are far away, much harder to stand against them when they are practiced by fellow "progressives."

By September, more than half of that board had been forced to resign, including its chairman and most of its top officers; so had the network's executive director and national program director. Months of court-supervised negotiations between the two sides followed, until a legal settlement was reached in December. The new board that emerged ended up with a clear majority of its members from the reform movement. At the first face-to-face public meeting of the new board in January, it became apparent how complete the reform movement's victory had been.

As an overflow crowd of hundreds looked on, the new directors completely reversed the old Pacifica policies. They ordered an end to all censorship on the network. They reinstated many employees who had been fired to their previous posts. They fired the station manager at WBAI who had been involved in some of the purges and accepted the resignation of the station manager at Houston's KPFT. In addition, they appointed Dan Coughlin, one of the key activists who led the national listener boycott, as interim executive director of the entire network. As part of the court settlement, during the next 18 months, the interim board must rewrite Pacifica's by-laws and oversee the first-ever listener elections of local advisory boards at all stations.

Perhaps never before in American history has a popular movement so completely turned around a media institution. On January 14, I returned to my old job as co-host of *Democracy Now!* alongside Amy Goodman. We came back to a network that is exhausted from a bitter internal war, and that is perhaps \$4 million in debt—the old board having virtually bankrupted Pacifica on their way out the door. But we returned to one of the few places in the American media where free speech and democratic accountability are not just slogans, but hard-fought realities. ■



Why We Need In These Times

By Robert W. McChesney

I remember seeing the very first issue of *In These Times* back in November 1976. I was just a month away from graduating college, and a close friend pulled me aside when it arrived in the mail. As a couple of young radicals, we had all the excitement opening up *In These Times* that I used to get 10 years earlier opening up the latest Beatles LP. I had heard rumblings about some new weekly newspaper that the great historian James Weinstein was launching, and now here it was in my hands. I was taken by it immediately. Finally, a publication written in plain English that covered politics from a left perspective and did not assume a working command of left-wing theory or membership in a sect. It was a paper I could show a committed activist, my neighbor, or my uncle who worked in a factory his whole life. I immediately subscribed and have seen nearly every issue published.

My God, the world sure looked different then. It seemed like progressive politics were on the rise, not just in the United States but worldwide. To my friends and me, the '60s had been an epiphany for the human race, and there could be no turning back to the dark days of racism, sexism, militarism and the capitalist (or communist) status quo. We thought we were part of a movement that would radically change the world for the better, and do so in our lifetimes. In the mid-'70s there remained a whole coterie of left-wing and alternative institutions founded in the preceding decade, from food co-ops to underground newspapers to community radio stations. Even Middle America dumped the Republicans in 1976. We thought the best was yet to come. The early *In These Times* confirmed our enthusiasm, with reports on the socialist government in Jamaica, left-wing victories across Europe, the rise of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and Dennis Kucinich, the boy-wonder mayor of Cleveland. The members of the best

rock band in the world, the Clash, were committed socialists. The times, they were a-changing, and now we had a national weekly newspaper to link us all together.

And that was Jim Weinstein's plan. "We wanted to create a magazine that was independent, but would serve as a source of information and education for the movement's popular constituency," he recalled a few years ago. "You cannot have a viable political movement of the left, right or center if it doesn't have its own press."

The premise for *In These Times* was that there was a resurgent left and the newspaper would ride the popular wave to a large circulation and considerable influence over political affairs. Instead of marking the dawn of a new progressive era, however, the mid-'70s proved to be exactly the opposite. Politics moved rightward with a vengeance. First under Carter, and then with no holds barred under Reagan, Bush and Clinton, the United States embraced neoliberalism, the ugly notion that business is the rightful and necessary ruler of society. Corporations were in the driver's seat, while labor, poor people and traditional left constituencies were getting run over. They had less influence than at any other time in memory.

But that doesn't mean *In These Times* has been a waste of time and money. To the contrary, *In These Times* has been invaluable over the past 25 years, shining the light of journalism on subjects generally left in the dark by the mainstream news media. The impact of *In These Times* has gone far beyond its subscriber base. *In These Times* has broken numerous stories that have been picked up by larger media, stories that otherwise would not have seen the light of day. *In These Times* also has provided a platform for some of the nation's finest political writers.

Moreover, progressive politics require progressive media just as much in moments of darkness as in moments of growth

and triumph. Indeed, without such media, the darkness may become permanent. Over the past quarter-century, *In These Times* has provided a trenchant critique of U.S. politics, giving citizens the information they need to organize and fight back. The world is a better place thanks to *In These Times*.

Accordingly, *In These Times* has joined an illustrious list of political media in U.S. history, going back to the revolutionary era. From abolitionists and feminists to populists, unionists and socialists, every progressive movement in U.S. history could almost be defined by its press. If there was no press, there was no movement. Consider, for example, the United States in the early 1900s. Members and supporters of the Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs published some 323 English and foreign language daily, weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines. Most of these were privately owned or were the publications of one of the 5,000 Socialist Party locals. They reached a total of more than 2 million subscribers. *Appeal to Reason*, the socialist newspaper that inspired Jim Weinstein to launch *In These Times*, alone had a readership of more than 750,000.

All of that changed over the course of the 20th century. Most important, the nature of our media system changed dramatically. Rather than being a competitive industry where newcomers could enter on the margins and make a go of it, the media became dominated by large firms operating in oligopolistic markets. This reduced the ability of leftist media to survive, let alone prosper. It also caused a major shake-up in journalism. Publishers realized that to continue using their monopoly newspapers as partisan engines might discredit the legitimacy of their enterprise, so they instituted "professional" journalism as the new model for their newsrooms. In this new world, trained editors and reporters would run the newsroom while owners and advertisers would concern themselves with the business side of the operation. The news would be fair, accurate and reflect no political bias.

Of course, it is impossible to have such nonpartisan journalism, and the newly minted code for professional journalists had three distinct biases written into it that reflected the commercial and political needs of the owners. First, to remove the

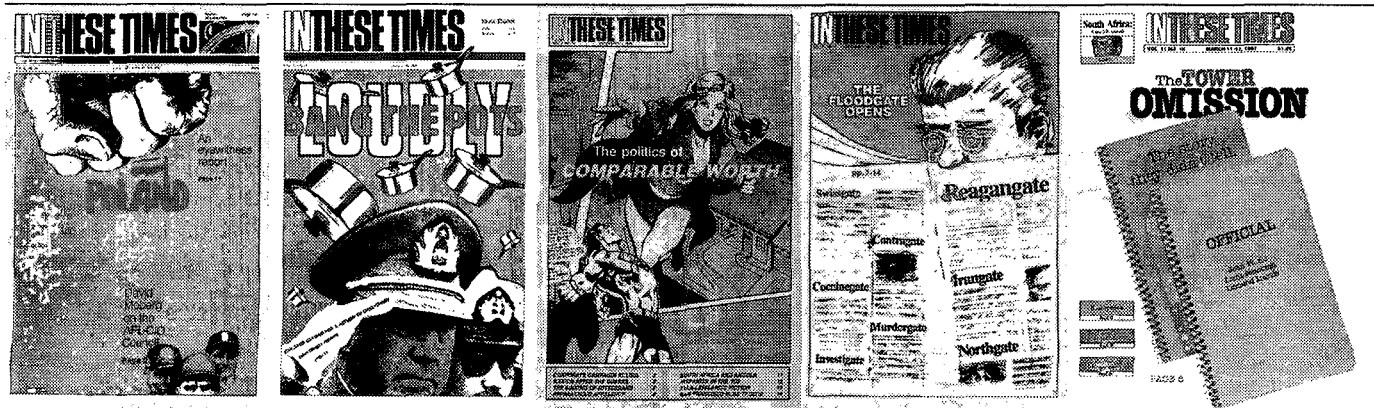
controversy connected with the selection of stories, it regarded anything done by official sources—e.g., government officials and prominent public figures—as the basis for legitimate news. This gave those in political office (and, to a lesser extent, business) considerable power to set the news agenda by what they spoke about and what they didn't.

The second bias is that professional journalism tends to present news in a decontextualized and non-ideological manner. In theory, one could read every professional news story on a topic and they all would be pretty much the same. An irony of professional journalism is that those stories which generate the most coverage—the Middle East, President Clinton's health care plan—often produce a confused and uninformed readership. In professional code, this decontextualization is accomplished in part by positing that there must be a news "hook" or "peg" to justify a story. Hence crucial social issues like racism or environmental degradation fall

You cannot have a viable political movement if it doesn't have its own press.

through the cracks of journalism unless there was some event, like a demonstration or the release of an official report, to justify coverage. So journalism tends to downplay or eliminate the presentation of a range of informed positions on controversial issues. This produces a paradox: Journalism, which in theory should inspire political involvement, tends to strip politics of meaning and promote a broad depoliticization. That is very bad news for the left.

The third bias of professional journalism is more subtle but most important: Far from being politically neutral, it smuggles in values conducive to the commercial aims of the owners and advertisers as well as the political aims of the owning class. Ben Bagdikian, author of *The Media Monopoly*, refers to this as the "dig here, not there" phenomenon. So it is that crime stories and stories about royal families and celebrities





become legitimate news. (These are inexpensive to cover and they never antagonize people in power.) So it is that the affairs of government are subjected to much closer scrutiny than the affairs of big business. And so it is that those government activities serving the poor (like welfare) get much more critical attention than those serving the interests of the wealthy (the CIA, for instance). The genius of professionalism in journalism is that it tends to make journalists oblivious to the compromises with authority they routinely make.

Of course, professional journalism has not been explicitly or viciously anti-labor or anti-left in most instances. The process is more subtle. And in moments of resurgence for the left and social movements, professional journalism is malleable enough to improve the quantity and quality of coverage. In the '40s, for example, full-time labor editors and reporters abounded on U.S. daily newspapers. Even ferociously anti-labor newspapers, like the *Chicago Tribune*, covered the labor beat. The 1937 Flint sit-down strike that launched the United Auto Workers was a front-page story across the nation. By the '80s, however, labor had fallen off the map and there were no more than a dozen labor beat reporters remaining on U.S. dailies. (The number is less than five today.) Hence the 1989 strike at Pittston Coal—the largest since Flint—was virtually unreported in the mainstream national media. Of course, poverty among workers is growing and workplace conflicts are as important as ever, but this is no longer considered news. And that has made the prospect of rejuvenating the labor movement vastly more difficult.

The experience with the mainstream media has been the same for other progressive social movements over the past 50 years. From peace and the environment to civil rights and feminism, news coverage has tended to be bad and filtered through elite lenses. The initial response to these movements by the press was to ignore them, trivialize them or, at times, demonize them. All in all, evaluations of all major progressive social movements conclude that the lack of a viable media outreach to the general population, or even to the progressive constituencies they were seeking to organize, has been a major barrier to success. That, of course, is much of what *In These Times* has aspired to provide.

During the past 25 years, it has gotten even more difficult for progressives to receive satisfactory press coverage in the mainstream media. This is due primarily to the tightening corporate ownership over the news media that has resulted from government deregulation of broadcasting and lax enforcement of antitrust statutes. Over the past two decades, the U.S. media system has been consolidated in the hands of

a small number of colossal conglomerates. To give some sense of proportion, in 2000 AOL purchased Time Warner in the biggest media deal ever, valued at around \$160 billion. That was 470 times greater than the value of the largest media deal that had been recorded by 1979. The nine or 10 largest media conglomerates now almost all rank among the 300 largest firms in the world; in 1975 there were only a couple of media firms among the 500 largest companies in the world.

These media conglomerates often pay a premium price for TV networks or newspaper chains, so they have incentive to apply the same commercial logic to their newsrooms that they apply to their other divisions. Why should they grant editors *carte blanche* when their other managers are held to a strict accounting of all their moves? The logical result has been a reduction in resources for journalism, a decline in costly and controversial investigative reporting, and a softening up of journalistic standards to permit less expensive and more commercially attractive journalism.

This does not bode well for the left or for democracy. Mainstream news and "business news" have morphed over the past two decades as the news is increasingly pitched to the richest one-half or one-third of the population. The affairs of Wall Street, the pursuit of profitable investments, and the joys of capitalism are now presented as the interests of the general population.

Media firms are among the leading beneficiaries of these global capitalist trade deals, which helps explain why their coverage of them throughout the '90s was so enthusiastic. The sad truth is that the closer a story gets to corporate power and corporate domination of our society, the less reliable the corporate news media are. And, in the final analysis, the U.S. mainstream media covered the extraordinary demonstrations against the WTO and global capitalism in Seattle in a manner not all that different from how the Chinese Communist Party press covered Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Over the past five years, there has been a rebirth of the left in the United States, but it has passed by almost entirely undetected by the same corporate news media that can tell you who Monica Lewinsky is dating or how many times Bill Gates picked his nose while at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. This *new new left* is dominated by young people and is organizing around human rights, labor rights, opposition to the death penalty and the criminal justice system, environmental issues and corporate power in general. It manifested itself in Seattle and then in Ralph Nader's 2000 presidential campaign. And there are numerous signs of openings for progressive politics among broader segments of the population. The soil for left politics is fertile, but nothing can happen without an organized left and viable independent media.

On September 11, 2001, the world was turned upside-down. Following the attacks on New York and Washington, the United States launched a worldwide war against terrorism that could last for a generation and reach the far corners of the globe. In a democratic society, the decision to go to war must be made with the informed consent of the population. That requires a press system to provide the citizenry with the information and perspectives to make such a decision. In some respects, for the notion of a free press, this is the moment of truth.

Americans once tended to be misinformed about world politics, but now they are uninformed. The U.S. citizenry is embarrassingly and appallingly ignorant of the most elementary political realities in other nations and regions. It is an unmitigated disaster for the development of a meaningful democratic debate over international policy, and highlights a deep contradiction between the legitimate informational needs of a democratic society and the need for profit of the corporate media.

The historical record suggests we should expect an avalanche of lies and half-truths in the service of power—in both the World Wars, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War, the government employed sophisticated propaganda campaigns to whip the population into a suitable fury—and that is exactly what we have gotten. But the U.S. news media, which love nothing more than to congratulate themselves for their independence from government control, did not so much as blink before they became the explicit organs of militarist and imperialist propaganda.

The Manichean picture conveyed by the media was of a benevolent, democratic, peace-loving nation brutally attacked by insane, evil terrorists who hate the United States for its freedoms and affluent way of life. Thus the only option was for the United States to immediately increase its military and covert forces, locate the surviving culprits and exterminate them; then prepare for a long-term war to root out and destroy the global terrorist cancer. Those who do not aid the U.S. campaign for justice—domestically as well as internationally—are to be regarded as accomplices who may well suffer a similar fate.

No skepticism was showed toward U.S. military, political and economic interests that might benefit from militarism and war. No hard questioning demanded evidence that the proposed war might actually reduce terrorism or bring justice to the terrorists responsible for the September 11 attacks. Those concerns, which would be applied to any other gov-

ernment that proposed to direct a world war, were avoided by the mainstream press. It looked suspiciously similar to the press coverage one would expect in an authoritarian society.

U.S. media corporations exist within an institutional context that makes support for U.S. military natural. Indeed, the U.S. government is the primary advocate for the global media firms when trade deals and intellectual property agreements are being negotiated. Coincidentally, at the very moment the corporate broadcasters were singing the praises of "America's New War," their lobbyists appeared before the Federal Communications Commission seeking radical relaxation of ownership regulations for broadcasting, newspaper and cable companies.

The current war may be the most serious global crisis in decades. For the notion of a free press, this is the moment of truth.

The current war may be the most serious global political crisis in decades. The need for viable democratic journalism has never been greater, and the performance of the mainstream news media has fallen far short of that goal. In this moment of darkness, our need for *In These Times* has never been greater.

After 25 years of feisty independent journalism, *In These Times* may finally be on the verge of the times for which it was intended. As the events of the next several years unfold, we are all going to be fortunate and thankful for the long and rich path *In These Times* has traveled, and all the hard lessons it has learned. It will serve us well in the coming struggle to radically transform this nation and the world. We should hope that someday *In These Times* will be regarded as having been 25 years ahead of its time. ■

Robert W. McChesney, a member of the *In These Times* board of directors, is a professor of communications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and co-editor of *Monthly Review*. He is the author, most recently, of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*. A longer version of this essay will appear in *Appeal to Reason: The First 25 Years of In These Times* (Seven Stories Press).



25

years of *In These Times*.

Job Whose Time Has Come

The following editorial appeared in the first issue of *In These Times*.

The election returns are in, but the future of the United States remains in doubt. Almost everyone was dissatisfied with the available choices. Few are delighted with the result.

Yet this campaign was not significantly worse than most presidential contests of recent decades.

The difference between this and past elections was not that most voters acted against rather than for a candidate or party. That has been common in this century. Nor were the two major parties less different from each other than before. Their differences were as real and explicit as at any time since the '30s.

The new element in this election is that more and more people find these differences inadequate to meet the problems facing our society. Voters and non-voters alike know, or sense, that the limits to public discourse set by the major parties prevent shedding old alternatives and defining new ones.

To more and more people it is clear that the political system is at an impasse. It presents us all with little more than dilemmas: choices between equally obnoxious or no longer credible alternatives. That is why the more exposure President Ford and President-elect Carter got, the harder it was to choose between them.

Since World War II, Republicans have won the presidency by promising to end wars presided over by Democrats and to bring prosperity with peace. Democrats have captured the White House with promises to end recessions presided over by Republicans and to bring progress through growth. But it is difficult to believe in, no less remember, prosperity without war. And it is no longer believable that simple material growth in the pursuit of private gain signifies progress.

The polls show that people want peace

without unemployment, economic insecurity and lost opportunities. They want progressive development and a healthy economy without war. They want stable prices and full employment, not one at the expense of the other. They want good education and health care, adequate housing and livable communities, honorable work and dignified leisure without crushing taxes and bankrupt cities. They want a compassionate society without paternalism and dependence.

They don't want the moon, just modest attainments in what the politicians never tire of telling them is "the best country in the world"—and the richest beyond ancestral dreams. And increasingly they know, or sense, that the system of economics in this country is unable to deliver the standard of living and quality of life they want, and that the system of politics is unwilling to make it do so.

It is true that inflation and unemployment, crime and health care, education and housing, free enterprise and big government, liberty and equality, even Karl Marx and "socialism" are discussed in election campaigns. But never the underlying reality. Corporate capitalism, this society's system of property, investment, resource- and labor-allocation is a political taboo. And yet, without that discussion all the rest remains abstract, hollow and unconvincing.

Capitalism is the unspoken reality of American politics. That is the one thing the major parties agree upon: praise capitalism (not too often and preferably by another name) but don't discuss it. Preclude serious discussion of the central reality of our times.

This is to be expected. The major parties are the protection agencies of corporate capitalism. They are committed in bipartisan consensus to accom-



modating government policy and public expectations to the capacities and limits of the system. It is their job to keep corporate capitalism out of, "above" politics, just as it was the job of the pre-Civil War Whig and Democratic parties to keep slavery out of politics. They failed then because determined people brought the reality of slave power into the electoral arena, giving birth to the Republican Party. It remains to be seen whether the Democratic and Republican parties will succeed in keeping corporate power out of electoral politics. If they do, they will only be doing their job, and socialists will not be doing theirs.

That job is to bring capitalism into politics as the great issue of our time. This newspaper is committed to beginning the job and to seeing it through. It is a job whose time has come. ■

In These Times has witnessed many changes in the world since its debut in the fall of 1976. The excerpts on the following pages offer just a glimpse at the major political and cultural developments of the past 25 years. Though far from comprehensive, these selections highlight some of the most important stories and most intriguing voices that have appeared in our pages. Many of the writers will be familiar to regular readers of *In These Times*; others may have appeared but once in the magazine or have moved on to other publications and endeavors. All represent *In These Times* at its best. —CRAIG AARON

1976

Ron Dellums

By John B. Judis

You are the closest thing to a socialist elected to Congress in 20 years. Your approach seems like the socialist ideal of uniting working people against corporate power to establish popular ownership and democratic control of society's basic wealth. Is that your view?

November 15

I think democratic socialism will ultimately prevail in this country because it makes an enormous amount of sense. We have to ask if the problems in society can be solved while we are propping up the major corporations. Right now the politician's code word is the "tradeoff of unemployment for inflation," but that's simply a way to ask if one is committed to the 10 or 12 million unemployed, or to the top 50 corporations in the United States.

Obviously, the Ford administration, and perhaps president-elect Carter, are committed to fighting inflation, to propping up the corporations as opposed to dealing with the human misery of unemployment. But if democracy means anything, it should mean a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people.

A Still Strong Voice

BY DAVID MOBERG

If the labor movement drift since the postwar purges has been toward caution, collaboration, conservatism and occasional outright corruption, it is impossible to write off the entire movement in those terms.

Union bureaucracies certainly have become entrenched at the expense of members, minorities, women and the unorganized. Even when active they usually have at heart the interests of members only and not other workers. Frequently they devote organizing time and money to raiding other unions.

Yet they also are changing, either under pressure from their ranks or in response to economic vicissitudes. Even though they lack a sense of mission, they still represent by far the strongest voice speaking on behalf of American workers. Even though they have consistently acted as brakes on more radical social change, and as buttresses of capitalism, they have been instruments of beneficial reforms. Members often bitterly hate their own union but will vigorously fight anyone who would destroy it.

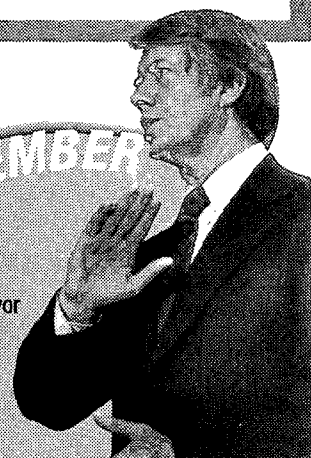
TIMELINE

1976-2001

NOVEMBER DECEMBER

NOVEMBER 2 Jimmy Carter elected president.

DECEMBER 20
Chicago Mayor
Richard J.
Daley dies.



... Gary
... ilmore executed
... h.

JANUARY 30 *Roots*
attracts 80 million
television viewers.

MAY 2 Clamshell Alliance occupies
site of proposed nuclear power
plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire.

JUNE 7 Dade County, Florida
passes anti-gay "Save Our
Children" ordinance.

JUNE 15 Spain holds its first free
election in more than 40 years.

AUGUST 16 Elvis
Presley dies.

IN OUR OWN IMAGE

January 12

Carter Kills Populist Hopes Early

BY ALAN WOLFE

If, after the inauguration, you find Cy Vance as secretary of state and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed," said Hamilton Jordan, Jimmy Carter's key aide, last summer.

Rarely has an administration failed, by its own standards, even before assuming office. Carter is not yet president and he has already broken just about every progressive promise he made during the campaign. Populism is out, and the Trilateral Commission is in. The appointments made by Carter reflect the greatest domination of the federal government by Wall Street since Herbert Hoover. ...

By deciding to go all the way with the Trilateral Commission, Carter has told blacks and working-class people who made his election possible what he thinks of them. There is no question that it was these folks and not the bankers who elected Carter, and he has responded by rubbing power in their faces. He is not even making an attempt to mystify the power with kind words. After two decades of economic mismanagement, political scandal and increasing illegitimacy, Carter has cast his lot with the mismanagers, corrupters and illegitimizers. His gall is phenomenal, but in truth his only two options were to do what he did or be a real populist, and the latter was never a serious option.

By Barbara Ehrenreich

The women's movement is beleaguered—in some regions, almost cornered. The ERA has been defeated in every state except Indiana where it has come up in the past two years. Abortion

rights have gone through so much legislative surgery that it's questionable whether they'll survive at all. And perhaps the most bitter pill of all: The rank-and-file opposition to the ERA and abortion is not coming from bands of testosterone-crazed males, but from women. ...

Aside from the conscious right-wingers, there's a whole other constituency for anti-feminism. Most of them are housewives. Unlike anti-ERA leader Phyllis Schlafly, though, they don't have their own housekeepers, secretaries and private family bomb shelters. But they're scared, too. The sexual and cultural "revolution" of the past 10 years didn't liberate them. ...

Right-wing anti-feminism at least seems to offer some simple comforts: That motherhood will be respected. That families will hold together. That things will go back to being more or less like they were supposed to be when you first got engaged.

But, of course, the right wing can't offer any real security because its class interests are opposed to those of the average working-class or lower-middle-class housewife. Right-wing anti-feminists rhapsodize about the glories of homemaking, but

oppose pensions for women who have put in a lifetime of it. They "honor motherhood" but oppose measures—like a guaranteed annual income—that could free mothers from total economic dependence on a man. They adore all fetuses until the moment they exit from the birth canal and add to the welfare rolls, the school tax rate and the nation's Medicaid bill. And, of course, the right has nothing to offer the working mother trying to make ends meet on \$3 an hour—except perhaps some literature on her "right" to work in an open shop.

I still think the women's movement has a fighting chance to become a majority movement. Phyllis Schlafly—plus the rest of the John Birch Ladies' Auxiliary types—is an enemy, no matter how many hormones we have in common. But the woman in curlers pushing a shopping cart with a few toddlers in tow and worrying about the price of ground chuck is, or should be, a sister.

If feminism is going to mean anything to her, the movement will have to rethink its image and revamp its program. Somewhere along the line the image of "feminism" got taken over by the gray-suited businesswomen with attaché cases and the purveyors of assertiveness training for managerial women—as if all we wanted was a chance to integrate, one by one, into a man's system. But the radical thrust of feminism always lay in its insistence on our connectedness as women: that we would support each other, stand together and remake the world for all women, for all people.

Is it too late to remake our public image in our own image? ■



STEVE KAGAN

Defending Israel and Palestine

Editorial by James Weinstein

From its inception, *In These Times* has been guided by basic principles respecting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that:

- Palestine is the homeland of both Israelis and Palestinian Arabs.
- The right of each to self-determination in the form of recognized statehood is beyond question.
- Peaceful coexistence and friendly cooperation between the state of Israel and a Palestinian Arab state (in the areas of the West Bank and Gaza) are desirable and possible. The long-term security and progress of both peoples require coexistence and cooperation.
- The Israeli government should recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people and their national aspirations; the PLO should recognize Israel as a legitimate state in Palestine and in the family of nations. On the basis of such mutual recognition, Israel and the PLO should engage in direct negotiations as part of the process leading to the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state.

May 17

- Both states should have secure and recognized boundaries, assured, if necessary, by international guarantees.
- The state of Israel and the Palestinian Arab state should cooperate in seeking the establishment of a refugee relief and resettlement fund under international auspices (preferably the United Nations) to facilitate the early development of the Palestinian Arab State, resettle Palestinian refugees, and aid Israel and Arab states to meet the just reparations claims of displaced Palestinian Arabs and displaced Jews.
- American socialists should not take the side of one nation against the other, but should support recognition of both Israeli and Palestinian Arab nationhood and promote understanding and cooperation between the two states sharing Palestine. We should support or oppose acts and policies of other nations (including the United States) accordingly.

To be a true friend of Israel is to be a friend of Palestinian statehood. It is not possible to be a friend of one and an enemy of the other. ■

Prison Camp of the Mind

BY DAVID ROBERG

Jonestown is rightly discussed in such starkly contrasting terms as heaven and hell, good and evil, socialism and fascism. It was the promise of life-enhancing utopia that gave [Jim] Jones the power to create a deathly disaster. Jones preyed on the best instincts of people to realize their worst fears. He turned the desire for collectivity into the service of tyranny. He turned the desire for a humane moral order into an amoral terrorism. In the name of love, he was a sadist worthy of the Marquis' imagination. In the name of liberating Americans from impending fascism, he imprisoned those who sought freedom through him. ... By preaching that the end justifies the means, he produced a result that was the antithesis of his expressed goals. Jones was the Monster Dialectician, the Cancer of Reason.

NADER'S YEAR?

By Chuck Fager

Will 1978 be the year that Ralph Nader plunges into electoral politics full blast? It looks like it. "We intend to make 'corporatism' an everyday word in America by next fall," he says. "Liberal versus conservative is no longer the dividing line in politics; the actual distinction is between the 'corporatists,' those who support and expand the powers of corporations, and 'consumerists,' those who are working to expand the power of the people. The abuses of power by large corporations is the No. 1 issue in our society, and we intend to make it the political issue of 1978."

February 22



LIONEL DELEVINGNE

JUNE 6 California voters approve Proposition 13, cutting property taxes and public education funding.

MAY 13 Funeral held for Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro after his kidnapping and assassination by Red Brigade terrorists.

JUNE 28 Supreme Court issues *Bakke* decision outlawing racial "quotas."

AUGUST 7 Emergency state and federal aid pledged to relocate residents of Love Canal.

SEPTEMBER 18 Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat sign the Camp David accords.

OCTOBER 16 John Paul II inaugurated as pope.

NOVEMBER 27 Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk murdered in San Francisco.

The Conservative Movement

By Sidney Blumenthal

"It's a sign of our strength that there is no candidate in the Republican Party who is going to run a left-of-center campaign for president," Richard Viguerie says. "This will be the first time in our lifetimes that no serious candidate for president will appeal to that liberal perspective. Slowly but surely we're moving the political balance much more to the center. Not to the right. But things are definitely moving our way."

Viguerie is relaxed in his corner office, surrounded by paintings of famous golf courses. His head is a gleaming sculpted dome with a few strands of hair brushed across it. He bubbles with optimism. "There isn't a Communist leader in the world worth his salt who doesn't feel that Communism isn't the wave of the future. ... That's what we have going now: The conservatives believe that they will govern America. They are totally convinced that they have the ability to govern and that they will govern in the foreseeable future. There's an electricity, an excitement that wasn't here six years ago."

Viguerie is fundamentalist in his political beliefs. What sets him off from mossbacks of previous generations is his sophistication. He has been willing to learn from sources other than fellow rightists. He is an apt pupil of George McGovern, the New Left and the AFL-CIO.

"We've taken close to 100 percent of the left's tactics," he confesses unashamedly. "What we're doing is what they did. We have been 30 years late in realizing how the left did it. We're into making a list of all the things they do and doing the same things."

On Viguerie's desk when I paid him a visit was a thick book containing copies of the direct-mail solicitations from the 1972 McGovern for President Campaign, which Viguerie holds in high professional esteem. "I'm studying it," he says. "I'm trying to build a movement. I don't know if you've heard that word much. Among us conservatives that's a word that's used constantly. The movement." ■

The China Syndrome Sequel

By Joanna Foley

In movie theaters near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, *The China Syndrome*

was playing.

Meanwhile,

a real-life

version of the scenario began 16 miles to the southeast at Three Mile Island. As the nation's worst nuclear accident unfolded with radiation spread over 2,000 square miles and a meltdown threatened in the reactor's core, life seemed to first imitate, then surpass, art at Unit Two on the Susquehanna River. The movie's viewers could at least relax after two hours when the threatened meltdown was narrowly averted. But anxious observers all across the country had to wait almost a week to be certain that the real finale wouldn't feature an explosion, a meltdown or an evacuation.

Never Surrender

BY DAVID HELVARG

MANAGUA—The first Sandinista unit, under the command of Comandante Marcos from Leon, arrived at the bunker about 10 a.m. By 11 a.m. an ammunition warehouse had accidentally been set afire and exploding ammunition was shooting off all around the area. Kids who'd never fired a gun before were stripping Guardia positions of guns and ammo and celebrating with wild firing. Red and black flags sprouted throughout the city.

Three blocks from the bunker, I ran into my friend Marcio from Leon. "It's good to see you boys alive," he said, hugging me and my photographer, John Hoagland. He told us that our friend Ariel had been killed in combat. "A lot of people have died," he said. "But now with peace, we have a chance to rebuild, you know. That butcher Somoza—you look what he did to his own country, his own people, for what? For greed, for power. But it wasn't enough. We're free now. You know what it means? Free after 47 years. I'm 41, and I've never lived in a free country to call my own. This is the happiest day of my life, not only mine I think, but the whole Nicaraguan people."

July 30

MAY JUNE

JUNE 18 United States and Soviet Union sign SALT II treaty.

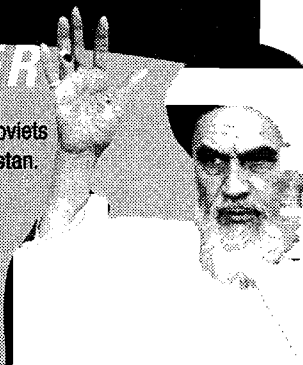
MAY 3 Margaret Thatcher elected as Britain's first prime minister.

OCTOBER 29 1,000 protesters arrested at anti-nuke protest on Wall Street.

NOVEMBER 4 Iranian students seize U.S. Embassy in Teheran, taking 70 hostages.

NOVEMBER 26 U.S. Steel announces 15 plant closings, cutting some 13,000 jobs.

DECEMBER 26 Soviets invade Afghanistan.



MARCH 24 Archbishop Oscar Romero
assassinated in El Salvador.

APRIL 18 Rhodesia
becomes Zimbabwe.

AUGUST 31 Poland's Solidarity union
ends 17-day strike at Gdansk shipyard.

SEPTEMBER 22 Iraq invades
Iran, starting a war that
will last eight years.

MAY 19 Mount St.
Helens erupts.

NOVEMBER 4 Ronald
Reagan elected as
president.

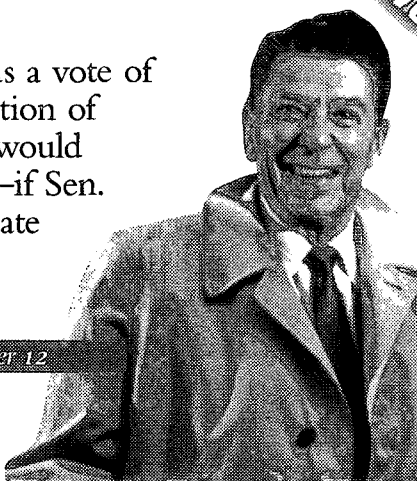
DECEMBER 8 John
Lennon murdered
in Manhattan.

NO TO LIBERALISM BY A LANDSLIDE

By John B. Judis

The 1980 Republican landslide was a vote of "no confidence" in an entire generation of Democratic politicians. The results would have been the same—if not worse—if Sen. Edward Kennedy or Secretary of State Edmund Muskie had been the Democratic nominee. The message was unmistakable: liberals of all kinds, from Sen. George McGovern to President Jimmy Carter, *get out*.

November 12



Afghan Tragedy

By Diana Johnstone

Afghanistan illustrates once again that the great powers' defense of their security is the biggest threat to the security of everybody else.

Leonid Brezhnev explained to *Pravda* that Soviet forces went into Afghanistan to save it from a "plot" to turn it into "an imperialist military bridgehead at the southern frontier of our country." The USSR could not just "sit back passively and watch the formation on our southern border of a serious threat to the Soviet state."

Now, it so happens there's a narrow mountain pass on the northeastern tip of Afghanistan that borders the far west of China. So of course China feels its security threatened. And the United States, although on the other side of the world, is so alarmed about its security that it is getting ready to grind its ploughshares into MX missiles and its grain into gasohol.

A teen-age soldier shot
dead in Afghanistan.



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October 22

On the Road with Barry Commoner

BY DAVID MOBERG

With a TV crew following him through the shopping center, Citizens Party presidential candidate Barry Commoner suddenly seemed plausible as a presidential candidate. It was a sign of how the campaign, lacking money for TV, is essentially shut out of what is presidential politics for most Americans—the tube. Since he does not have a shot at winning, his ideas—however interesting—are little more newsworthy than if he were still just a professor. The TV reporter from CBS even suggested that he risked losing influence by running, since he might now appear kooky rather than continue to be respected Dr. Commoner, the professor. Politics is still basically a horse-race for the mass media—and for most people, even if they wish it were a different horse race. One of Commoner's favorite stories from the campaign concerns an Albuquerque TV reporter who started the interview, "Mr. Commoner, are you a serious candidate, or are you just running on the issues?"

JANUARY 20 Reagan sworn in; Iran releases hostages.

FEBRUARY 23 Reagan issues "white paper" to justify U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

MARCH 30 Reagan shot by John Hinckley Jr.

JULY 7 Sandra Day O'Connor nominated to the Supreme Court.

OCTOBER 6 Anwar Sadat assassinated during military parade in Cairo.

DECEMBER 13 Polish leaders crush Solidarity strikes, impose martial law.



As PATCO Goes, So Goes the Union

By David Moberg

DENVER—"Reagan is taking on unionism," says Carl Conant, vice president of the PATCO local at Stapleton Airport. "He has taken on PATCO No. 1. Then the rest are ducks in a row."

Controller Dave Rambeau figures that the direct and indirect costs of the strike

to the economy run close to \$100 million a

day. Firing all the controllers will cost the government \$200 million for retirement and vacation pay, plus millions more in legal fees and other efforts to break the strike. The initial training of each new controller (3,000 to start, but obviously more if PATCO members don't return) is \$175,000 plus additional on-the-job training costs. "If you add all these things together," Rambeau says,

"it's at least \$3.5 billion or so. Our ideal contract would have cost \$575 million. So it is simply blatant union-busting."

Most of the controllers thought of themselves as solid patriots and ordinary scrupulously law-abiding folks. "I'm married, with one child, one dog and one cat," Rambeau says. "I'm just Joe American."

But their view of America is changing. "There's something wrong with America when a man on strike is taken to prison in shackles," Conant says. "There's something wrong when people with \$30,000-a-year jobs risk those jobs to go on strike. I love America, but if they tear down the unions, you might as well

move to Russia. Here's the same man who wants to get government out of our personal business destroying our union. It seems like a contradiction." ■

1981

Vive La France

BY DIANA JOHNSTONE

PARIS—"Vive La France Socialiste!" Exultant and half-joking at the same time, the people of the left tried out new phrases, sang old revolutionary songs and danced in the streets to convince themselves and each other that the future promised by so much of their past was at last going to come true.

"La France va redevenir la France. ... France is going to be France again," predicted Madame the grocer next door when I rushed in to buy a bottle of champagne, minutes after the news flash that Francois Mitterrand was elected president. "Now the young people will have something to look forward to," she said. "The French weren't made to be computers. People were getting more sad and mean. Now there's going to be a whole cultural revival, just watch."

The east side of Paris, which is the left side, streamed to its main square, the Place de la Bastille, for speeches and fireworks, music and tears. Getting rid of Valery Giscard d'Estaing was a new Bastille Day.

Little To Cheer About

BY FRED HALLIDAY

THE victory of Reagan and the cold-blooded attitude of Alexander Haig suggest that a new and ominous chapter in U.S. relations with the Third World is opening. The

Iranians scorned those who sought to negotiate some new relation with the United States after their revolution. ... The self-righteous nationalism of the *mullahs*, however historically justified, has been an extremely dangerous international phenomenon. From South Korea to El Salvador, those likely to suffer from a new U.S. aggressiveness will have the Ayatollah Khomeini to thank for much of this new belligerency. ...

Inside Iran the hostage issue has served as a massive diversion from the urgent social and economic tasks facing the post-revolutionary regime and as an illusory battle that has distracted energy from the real difficulties facing the country. It has strengthened the clerical right. It has served further to divide the followers of the revolution, and it made it that much easier for Iraq to launch its attack, secure in the knowledge that Iran's traditional weapons supplier, the United States, would not supply new arms. The negative consequences of this affair are things that the Iranian people, as well as the people across the world, will have to live with for a long time to come.



The Idea of Palestine

By Edward Said

The idea of Palestine living in all Palestinians is not just a matter of land, water and a flag. They are important, but not the only thing. What matters about Palestine is what has always prevented Israel from converting its military superiority into lasting political gains: that invincible Palestinian desire to keep hold of what is right and to reject what is wrong. By most standards, the Palestinians are a modestly endowed people, although a people possessed by what is in the strict sense a secular ideal. They want justice, but not abstract justice. Rather, they want something that can be lived by them collectively in forms that can still be called just. In support of this, they have offered no metaphysical rationale, no divinely ordained transhistorical scheme. For them the idea of Palestine is adequate to their real memory, their actual present and their minimal requirements for the future.

September 8

Back in Guatemala Again

By Allan Nairn

GUATEMALA CITY—Jesse Garcia, a 32-year-old captain in the Green Berets, is an expert in demolitions, combat

arms, ambushes and helicopter assault tactics.

November 15

For two years he commanded an airborne unconventional warfare unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Since July, Garcia has been posted in Guatemala, a country to which the United States officially sends no military aid. The Pentagon says Garcia is there "as an English teacher." But in a recent four-hour interview, and on an armed patrol with 40 Guatemalan officers-in-training, Garcia described himself as a military trainer whose job is "not much different" from that of U.S. advisers in neighboring El Salvador. ...

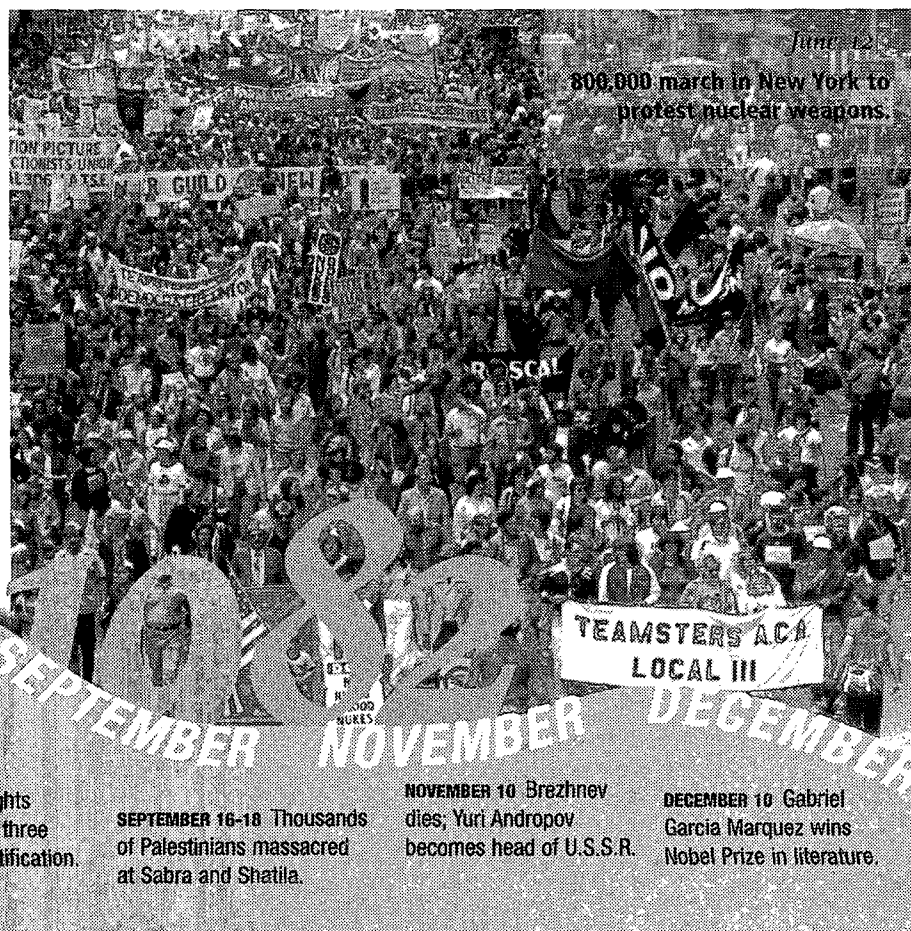
Garcia believes that he has come to the frontier of the next major war for the United States. During the interview he predicted that U.S. Green Berets would be fighting in Guatemala within one or two years. He estimated that two

combat battalions—about 1,000 men committed for a two-year stay—would be needed to do the job.

"Basically," he said, "they would train the government they wanted in power to stay in power and wipe out the opposition." He added that the American troops would serve as a "force multiplier," organizing the Guatemalans into Green Beret-style units and helping lead them into combat.

Garcia predicted a Guatemalan death toll of 50,000, most of them civilians. "It's going to be a big war. Korea in 1950, Vietnam in 1960, Central America in the '80s. And it's all because of Communism."

"The sting of Vietnam is still lingering," Garcia went on, "and it'll never go away. But it's just a matter of what's going to be more important—living with a memory that we can't get away from or stopping something that's like a train coming down toward us ... the Communist Express. How can we afford to lose Central America? We couldn't afford to lose South Vietnam." ■



Abortion and Freedom

BY ELLEN WILLIS

The right understands—as the left too often has not—that the rejection of biological determinism implicit in the act of abortion is the moral bedrock of women's liberation. Just as the threat of rape affects the feelings and behavior of all women, not just those who are raped, the right to abortion changes the condition of all women—gay as well as straight, those who abhor abortion as well as those who are thankful for it. To refuse to have an abortion now is an act of choice and will, rather than acquiescence to the law and fate. Legal abortion is not just one reform, one new freedom among many: It is a basic precondition of freedom.

June 15

WASHINGTON WINS

Editorial by James Weinstein

"We were slow to move from the protest movement into politics," Harold Washington said just after he won the Chicago Democratic mayoral primary in February. "We were lulled to sleep thinking that passing a few laws was enough. But we've got to be involved in the mainstream political activity. That's what's happening here in Chicago, and that's the lesson that's going out across the country."

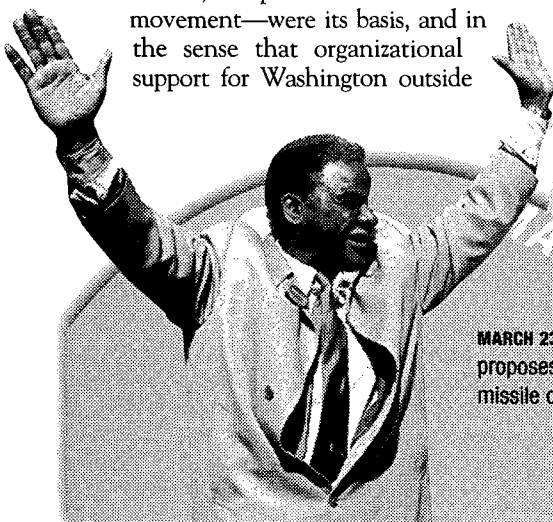
This "coming into political maturity" of minority groups that, as Washington says, once thought simple street protests were enough, took a giant leap on April 12 when a sizable majority of Hispanic voters and enough left and liberal whites joined the overwhelming majority of blacks to give Chicago its first black mayor.

This was a victory for the left, both in the sense that the natural left constituencies—blacks, Hispanics and the labor movement—were its basis, and in the sense that organizational support for Washington outside

the black community came from left groups ranging from unions like AFSCME to the National Organization for Women to the Democratic Socialists of America. And it was a victory over racism in the most highly segregated of American cities, even though the election also demonstrated how deeply divided Chicago's working people are by race. ...

The left—especially the socialist left—has long talked about coalitions of labor, blacks, women and others. But while such coalitions frequently have been assembled on paper, and occasionally around demonstrations and protests, they rarely, if ever, have been effective in electing our own people, either black or white, to office. ... Prudently, Washington is promising no miracles. But he is promising, within the limitations imposed upon him by forces over which he has no control, to provide all groups in the community their fair share of the city's resources. That promise alone, if carried out, would be a giant step forward. ■

April 20



MARCH 23 Reagan proposes "Star Wars" missile defense plan.

AUGUST 21 Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino killed in Manila.

AUGUST 12 17 civilians gunned down during anti-Pinochet protests in Chile.

SEPTEMBER 1 Soviets shoot down Korean Airlines flight 007.

October 19

Gay Body Politics

BY RICHARD KAYE

However the gay community has been represented or misrepresented by the mainstream media, nearly all gay leaders argue that the appearance of a deadly disease affecting gay men for which there is as yet no cure will have a radical effect on the gay community. "It has presented the most radical challenge to the homosexual community, since the legacy of the Stonewall Riots, which occurred more than 10 years ago," insists Dennis Altman, author of a number of books on the gay movement.

"Curiously enough, gay identity, once secured, is now endangered by two perils, one tragic, the other theoretical and possibly benign," Edmund White wrote recently. The theoretical danger he refers to is the right-wing backlash that has come with AIDS, from groups like Dallas Doctors Against AIDS—working for the criminalization of homosexuality for health reasons—and the Moral Majority, whose newsletter regularly warns that "America's families" are under attack by a hazardous gay lifestyle.

But for White and other gay leaders, the issue that is at least as important as the reactionary response to AIDS is the question of how the gay community will respond to the medical threat to gay relations that AIDS presents. ... "My hope," White adds, "is that the current health crisis and the philosophical quandary about gay identity will somehow lead to a more profound vision of community."

OCTOBER 25 216 Marines killed in Beirut suicide bombing.

OCTOBER 31 U.S. troops invade Grenada.

JULY 19 Democrats
nominate Walter
Fondale and
Geraldine Ferraro.

OCTOBER 28 China marks
35th year of Communist
rule with capitalist eco-
nomic reforms.

NOVEMBER 2 First
woman executed in
the United States
since 1962.

NOVEMBER 6
Reagan/Bush
re-elected in
landslide.

DECEMBER 3 Thousands
killed by toxic gas leak
at a Union Carbide plant
in Bhopal, India.

DECEMBER 22 Bernard Goetz
shoots four black youths on
a New York subway.

1984: Are We There Yet?

By Christopher Lasch

1984, written when George Orwell himself was dying of tuberculosis, derives its emotional power not from the political analysis Orwell borrowed from James Burnham, but from its dramatization of a

December 19

world in which death has become unbearable because of the fear that future generations will take no interest in our affairs. This fear of a meaningless death reaches its climax in the brutal remark with which O'Brien destroys Winston Smith's last hope and the last shred of his resistance to the totalitarian state: "You must stop imagining that posterity will vindicate you, Winston. Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history."

It is above all modern consumer culture that makes it hard for us to take an interest in the future, by conveying to us at every turn the implicit message that the future will bear no resemblance to the past and by urging us, moreover, to squander our natural resources and energy supplies without any reference to the needs of future generations. We live today in a curiously insubstantial world, a world of images and abstractions in which organized expertise has replaced practical experience and images of things have become more vivid than things themselves.

Orwell's reflections on this subject revolve around the concept of common sense, to which he gives a double meaning. Common sense is the experience we have in common, and it embodies the common people's empirical knowledge of things rather than abstractions invented by intellectuals. For Orwell ... totalitarianism represents the final triumph of ideological abstractions over common sense. ...

The image of totalitarianism hides more than it reveals. It encourages us to

ask whether the welfare state shows signs of turning into a police state, when we might better ask whether political freedom any longer has much meaning if it serves only to make possible the "private enjoyment of life."

Philip Roth has aptly remarked of the contrast between Eastern Europe and the West, "In the West everything goes and

nothing matters; there, nothing goes and everything matters." If this puts the contrast too sharply, it still alerts us to the danger that individual autonomy, as Orwell called it somewhat misleadingly—that is, the capacity of moral judgment and self-regulation, the capacity for self-sacrifice, the willingness to accept the consequences of one's actions—can be weakened as effectively by the empty freedom of consumerism as by dictatorship and regimentation. ■

Jesse Jackson

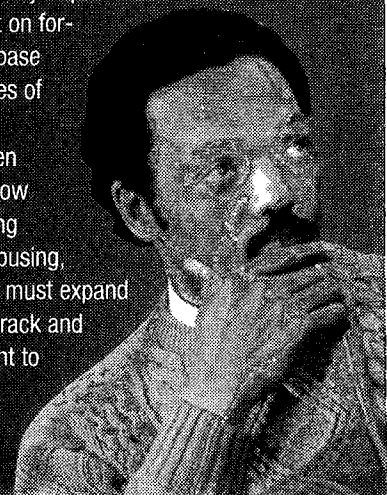
BY DAVID MOBERG

If you were to address a middle-aged white Steelworker or Autoworker, why should he support you?

Peace abroad should appeal to all of us. This generation is threatened by nuclear build-up. Our lives are threatened, our economy is threatened. He needs peace to re-establish his job base and convert it from military buildup. If he wants to choose the human race over the nuclear race, he would have great incentive to relate to this campaign. If he wants an earth for his children, if he looked at the cost of the military industry, he should relate to this campaign. The Steelworker ought to have a sense of social justice. A nation 53 percent female ought to afford an Equal Rights Amendment for

women. After all, his wife is a woman, his mother is a woman, his daughter, his aunt. Also, the government ought to have some responsibility to protect steel and agriculture. If you become dependent on foreign sources of steel, you can have your industrial base zapped. If you become dependent on foreign sources of food, your nation can starve.

In the past decade, the Democratic Party has been torn apart by conflicts between groups in the Rainbow Coalition and the old guard, with some of them being drawn into the conservative camp over issues like busing, affirmative action and integration. The old wineskin must expand and make room for new wine. It does not have to crack and split. You have a new generation of people who want to participate in the Democratic Party and not go to a third party. If the party is wise enough to accommodate the majority of Democrats, it will win.



MARCH 13 Mikhail Gorbachev chosen to lead Soviet Union.

APRIL 23 Coca-Cola unveils "New Coke."

MAY 5 Reagan honors dead Nazi SS soldiers at Bitburg Cemetery.

MAY 15 Philadelphia police bomb MOVE headquarters, killing 11 and leaving hundreds homeless.

JULY 10 French agents bomb Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior* in New Zealand.



April 24

Sanctuary in the Heartland

BY BETH MASCHINOT

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA—The world goes by as Cedar Rapids watches unperturbed: that is how the people at Faith United Methodist Church portray their city. In fact, on April 14, the day that Faith United was publicly greeting Guillermo, a Salvadoran refugee who had come to the church for sanctuary, the Cedar Rapids press, and most of the city, ignored the event. ...

[But] the stark church was packed as 20-year-old Guillermo told why he fled El Salvador. "In 1979, they killed my dad," he said. "He was coming home from work five minutes after curfew. The National Guard stopped him and beat him savagely. Finally, they ripped him up with a machine gun. ... Two years later, they killed my mom. She was coming from the country to sell vegetables in the city. The National Guard ransacked the vegetables, throwing them everywhere. Then they beat her and laughed, saying, 'Communist, tell me where the camp of your guerrilla friends is.' Finally, they poured gasoline on her and set her on fire." ...

Scores of Catholic missionaries who've worked in Central America have trooped through Faith United's doors, and often they contradict the mainstream media's version of the conflicts there. Church member Norma LeMaster says she still does not consider herself a "political person." But now she believes that there are two sides to every Central American question. And increasingly she thinks that ... "all the others we've heard who've seen it first-hand can't be all wrong."

FARRAKHAN NATION

By Salim Muwakkil

NEW YORK—The huge crowd attracted by Minister Louis Farrakhan to Madison Square Garden was growing impatient with

October 23

the slow process the security-conscious Nation of Islam was using to allow entrance into the arena. Portions of the crowd were threatening to get out of hand when an amplified voice boomed this message: "I'm sure Mayor Koch has planted some troublemakers in this crowd to create a disturbance so the press can have a field day with negative propaganda about Minister Farrakhan. If you brothers and sisters see someone making trouble, please inform them that Koch's plan won't work." The crowd calmed down immediately.

That shrewd manipulation of popular passions is emblematic of how NOI, through the charismatic leadership of Farrakhan, has harnessed the spirit of the times to fuel the kind of mass popularity that has been absent in the black community since the days of Malcolm X. He also inspires the same kind of hatred. ...

The crowd, though diverse, roared in unison when Farrakhan said such things as: "No matter what they've said against me, black people are still coming out to hear what I have to say. This means that their propaganda no longer has any effect on them. Black leaders, you are finished if you stand with the enemy of your people."

The "enemy" reference was in response to a news conference held a few days earlier in which a multiracial range of political and religious leaders

denounced Farrakhan and repudiated his message. The collective denunciation was orchestrated by Koch, one of Farrakhan's harshest critics. Among the black leaders denouncing him was City Clerk David Dinkins, who is the city's most powerful black politician. Farrakhan singled out Dinkins for special ridicule, calling him a "silly Tom."



He said the reason people of Dinkins' ilk did "the master's" bidding is because they don't properly fear black people. "They fear white people," Farrakhan said to the adoring throng. "But they have to learn to fear the people they are supposed to represent."

He finished the subject with this question: "Do you feel we ought to let them live?"

The fired-up crowd answered: "No!" ■

An Impossible Failure

By Lawrence Weschler

If there ever is a nuclear war, chances are it will go remarkably like the shuttle disaster. That's one reason the imagery of that disaster continues to hold such fascination for us, why we studied the video images every night on the evening news—new images, seemingly, each night from some fresh perspective, revealing some new angle. We realize, if only subliminally, that we are being afforded a premonition.

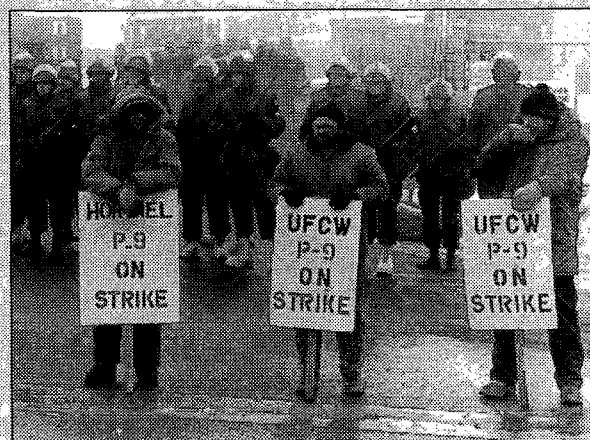
Mankind as a whole today sits perilously strapped to a doomsday machine of our own devising. The globe itself has become like a giant booster hurtling through space, enormous explosive potential held barely in check, atop which we sit huddled, secured to our fragile life-support systems. Like the seven shuttle astronauts, we've been assured that the machine contains safeguards two and three deep, checks and counterchecks and checks of counterchecks, that nothing can possibly go wrong. ("The space shuttle Challenger's solid fuel booster rockets were not equipped with sensors," the *New York Times* reported within days of the catastrophe, "because designers thought the boosters 'were not susceptible to failure.'"); and indeed, things have been going right for so long that we've become inured; we've grown to take success—or at any rate, the impossibility of failure—for granted.

And then something happens. It begins with a pinprick leak over the side—along the rocket's South African rim, say, or over by its Iran-Iraq seal, its Israeli joint, its Polish latch. In retrospect we can now see the leak may have developed owing to a fluky set of extra-

neous climactic conditions—it was too cold the night before, the price of oil or gold was dropping, or rising debt pressures were straining established orders, a particular minority was refusing any longer to countenance its continued oppression. The leak rapidly grew in intensity: The hiss became a spout became a geyser, an assassination or a food price increase provoked a riot that provoked a mobilization, a pre-emptive raid, a counter-raid.

The entire structure began to shudder violently—as the crisis burgeoned, leaders and computers strained mightily to cope with a situation increasingly out of control, one that had never before been encountered in any of the exhaustive predictive models. The vibrations were becoming too extreme, a latch perhaps shook loose, one booster veered toward the casing of another—the superpowers went on red alert, they removed the safety latches from the weapons in their respective arsenals, just in case.

And then ... it's already over. The climactic spasm, when it happens, it happens so suddenly and annihilates so completely that we can't even see it happening. We slow down the video tape, slow it down some more, and there's not a single moment, a single frame, when the explosion is just beginning. There are sparks, little flashes racing up and down the belly of the booster, but one moment the rocket is still there, entire, and the next it's utterly vaporized: There's no in-between. Just as it was never supposed to happen. ■



JANUARY 20 Minnesota governor calls in National Guard to protect a Hormel plant in Austin from striking workers.

Is the North Network Cocaine Connected?

BY DENNIS BERNSTEIN AND VINCE BIELSKI

In *These Times* has pieced together the outlines of what might yet become another major scandal for the Reagan administration. The picture that emerges is of two separate operations—one allegedly set up by Oliver North in 1984 to supply arms to the Contras, and the other a Colombian-based cocaine trafficking operation that had been smuggling the drug into the United States for several years—that merged together for their mutual benefit.

December 10

FEBRUARY 10
"Baby Doc"
Duvalier flees
from Haiti.

APRIL 15 American
bombers attack Libya.

FEBRUARY 26 Ferdinand Marcos leaves the
Philippines; Corazon Aquino takes power.

OCTOBER 2 Congress
passes South Africa sanc-
tions over Reagan veto.

APRIL 30 Soviet Union acknowledges
Chernobyl disaster; meltdown sends a
toxic cloud around the globe.

HOME IS WHERE THE ENEMY IS

By Christopher Hitchens

German socialist Karl Liebknecht had a slogan with which he rallied people against imperialist war and Prussian chauvinism. "The main enemy," he would cry, "is at home!" After leading Germany to massacre and defeat in World War I, the German right adopted a paranoid distortion of this internationalist credo and began to preach menacingly about "the enemy within" and the "stab in the back."

Over the past months we have had many revelations about the world of Oliver North. Yet these have been chiefly journalistic revelations about a world of dummy banks, cut-outs, bag men and secret government. Now it's time to consider what we have learned about the world of right-wing pathology and the powerful images and impulses that sustain it. ...

What have we here? A nut, to be sure. But a certain kind of nut, with his own logic and his own theory—and his own mandate from the leader of the Free World. North is a leading member of that large, confused group on the right that is dedicated to wiping out that stain of defeat in Vietnam, that knows the defeat was inflicted by the American liberals, and that thinks the lesson of the Bay of Pigs is the necessity of air cover the next time. ...

While the liberals were making a concerted effort to forget Vietnam, the right was refighting the war in its head and swearing strange oaths. From the assumption that it was enfeebled democracy that had sapped the national will in

Indochina, men like North made the deduction that a successful comeback had to be consciously anti-democratic. How astounded they must have been to find a president who so warmly shared their views, and so promiscuously gave them a free hand.

The "secrecy" of this operation, so decried by establishment critics, was its essence. Secret from whom? The Israeli right was told, and the State Department was not. The Iranians were told, and the cabinet was not. Carl Channell and Richard Secord knew, and Sens. Barry

Goldwater and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the Intelligence Committee did not. The Sultan of Brunei was taken into confidence, and the *New York Times* was kept in the dark.

Most of all, the voters and workers and citizens and taxpayers were systematically cheated and deceived. After all, they were at home—where the enemy is. ■

Did Reagan Steal the 1980 Election?

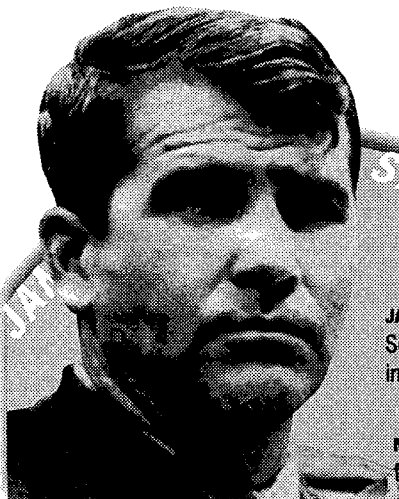
BY BARBARA HONEGGER AND JIM NAURECKAS

In October 1980, nothing worried the Reagan campaign so much as the possibility that the 52 hostages held by Iran might come home. The Reagan camp feared that the public perception of President Carter's weakness would evaporate if he could win the captives' release before the election—what Reagan staffers called an "October surprise."

But in the campaign's closing weeks, the mood of high anxiety suddenly changed. In late October, Barbara Honegger was working as a researcher for the campaign's Arlington, Virginia national headquarters. "We don't have to worry about an October surprise," a jubilant staffer at the campaign's operations center told her. "Dick cut a deal."

"Dick" was Richard Allen, Reagan's chief foreign policy adviser. And the "deal," research by *In These Times* suggests, was an agreement that Reagan would guarantee post-election arms shipments to Iran in exchange for delaying the hostages' release until after the November 4 election. Why would the Reagan campaign seek such a seemingly incredible arrangement? Because it saw an October surprise as the campaign's No. 1 threat.

In late fall, surveys still found the election too close to call. Reagan's top pollster, Richard Wirthlin, predicted that a pre-election hostage release would boost Carter at least 5 to 6 percent in the polls, and as much as 10 percent—giving him a sure victory—if the release came before the campaign's final week. The Reagan Revolution would be over before it had begun.



JANUARY 9 House and Senate form panels to investigate Iran-Contra affair.

MAY 8 Gary Hart withdraws from presidential race.

OCTOBER 19 Stock market plunges 508 points—worst crash since 1929.

OCTOBER 23 Senate rejects Robert Bork as Supreme Court nominee.

DECEMBER 9 Palestinian intifada erupts in the occupied territories.



MARCH 9 Jesse Jackson leads Democrats with 25 million votes on Super Tuesday.

APRIL 4 Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham impeached.

MAY 16 Soviet forces begin retreating from Afghanistan.

JULY 20 Iran-Iraq war ends.

DECEMBER 21 Pan Am Flight 103 explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland.

The Scarlet Letter

By David Moberg

Finally, near the end of his campaign, Michael Dukakis owned up to being a "liberal." But for a couple of months, George Bush, pronouncing the "L-word" with a derisory sneer, was able to define the term. Dukakis simply whined

about being labeled, confirming a sense

that there must be something wrong with the politics that dare not speak its name. It looked like the final collapse of a political tradition. Liberalism was taking a terrible drubbing with nobody to defend it. What had happened?

Ronald Reagan managed to knit together his coalition out of the fragmented electorate partly by elaborating a powerful myth that a return to a simple, carefree, omnipotent America could be reached through the magic of slashing big government. But the Democrats have lost any comparable ability to reassemble their fragmented constituency with a unifying, compelling sense of mission. Dukakis threw in the towel in his convention speech when he declared that competence, not ideology, was the issue.

Bush and his unwitting but persuasive ally, rapist Willie Horton, certainly proved that wrong. The Republican didn't express a powerful unifying myth in the Reagan manner; he simply imposed a pejorative label on Dukakis. Bush associated liberalism with a general softness, especially on crime and defense; alien values; threats to the family; rampant permissiveness; anti-Americanism; and radicalism.

The continued perplexing irony for people on the left is that public opinion seems strongly ... on the side of many "liberal" programs, except welfare. Majorities favor increased spending for most major domestic needs, such as education, health, childcare and the environment. But there are big worries about how effective government programs are and about who should pay for them. And without a strong alternative vision, conservative ideology triumphs. ...

If there is any lesson in Dukakis' encounter with the "L-word," it is that liberals—even people who call themselves "progressives," "populists" or "leftists"—can't make much headway if they are not prepared to defend their views politically and to win the consent of the governed. ■

What Kind of Change?

By Michael Harrington

Those who lose heart at the very eve of a new generation of change should remember the profound truth Antonio Gramsci articulated from a jail cell in a decade that saw the triumph of fascism. ... Socialism, Gramsci said, was not a matter of a political victory on this or that day, or even this or that decade. It was not an economic program, a recipe. It was a "moral and intellectual reformation," a fight to transform the culture and will of those who, from time immemorial, had been made subordinate, the epochal work of the creation of a new civilization.

We live today in the most radical of times even though the temporary ascendancy of Reagan and his similars often conceals that fact. Humanity is fighting at this very moment over the content of that new civilization—of a new planet, if you will—and that struggle will go beyond the lifetime of every one of us. ...

Those who join the movement for the immediate rewards of power are advised to apply elsewhere. Those who are willing to wager their lives on the possibility of freedom and justice and solidarity should pay their dues.

December 21

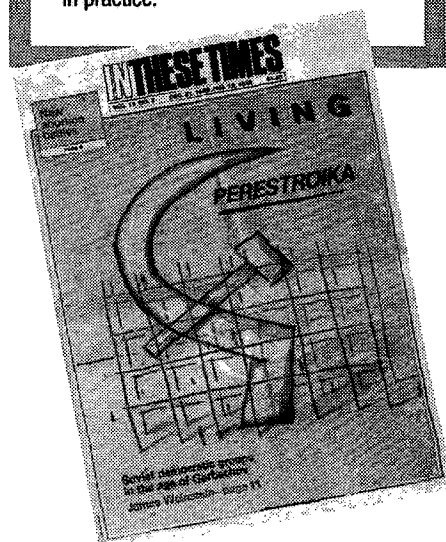
Living Perestroika

By James Weinstein

MOSCOW—Since April of 1985, when *perestroika* began at Mikhail Gorbachev's initiative, a profusion of Soviet discussion clubs, informal independent press clubs, ecology clubs and social action groups have sprung up like mushrooms after a spring rain.

The first group in this renewal of the movement to democratize the Soviet Union—the Club for Social Initiatives—began a mere two years ago. But now there are hundreds of such groups in Moscow and an estimated 30,000 throughout the country, all of them dedicated to ending the stifling conformity imposed from above.

For now, the existence of these groups, if not always their activity, is tolerated. No one knows for how long, however. As a result, like mushrooms, all are vulnerable and some are ephemeral—springing up, spreading their spores and disintegrating. But resonating with each other under the surface of official society, these associations of citizens have a palpable vitality. As a social movement, they embody the best hope for the realization of the lofty democratic ideals proclaimed by the revolutionaries of 1917 but denied in practice.



FEBRUARY 24 Ayatollah Khomeini puts \$1 million bounty on Salman Rushdie.

APRIL 9 Hundreds of thousands march on Washington in support of *Roe v. Wade*.

JUNE 5 Polish voters throw out Communists

JUNE 21 Supreme Court rules that flag-burning is protected by the Constitution.

DECEMBER 25 Thousands dead in Romanian Revolution; Nicolae Ceaucescu executed.

NOVEMBER 28 Czech Communist Party relinquishes power.

DECEMBER 29 U.S. troops invade Panama, oust Gen. Manuel Noriega.

1989 TWIST OF FATE

By Alisa Joyce

The most astounding consequence of the assault on Beijing is that, according to the people of Beijing and their government, the event never happened.

June 21

History is being brazenly rewritten in China,

with the compliance of the once-rebellious masses, through the formidable terror of the police state.

Some Beijing residents laugh if you try to question them about the events ... and wave you away. Others, pressed further, say they know in their hearts what happened, but will never speak the truth with their mouths.

In Fuxingmen—where the troops plowed through the people to reach

Tiananmen Square—people say things like, "I heard nothing on Saturday night, I was watching TV." A man with a bullet wound in his shoulder chases you away if you try to question him. Another man, whose 26-year-old wife died, says it was her own fault for breaking martial law.

The culprits of Saturday night, indeed of the entire democratic movement, were "hooligans," "ruffians" and "counter-revolutionary elements," the government informed the people. After a few days of prudent silence, Chinese hard-line leaders Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng and Qiao Shi stepped forward to take credit for putting down the "counter-revolutionary turmoil" and to congratulate the People's Liberation Army for a job well done. ■



AP/WIDEWORLD

May 3

Alaska Aftermath

BY TERRY CARR

Walking the shorelines of Prince William Sound's islands—at a time when, normally, the colors and noise of spring would be breaking out all around—calls to mind a messy mechanic's oil-changing pit. The spill smeared rocks and gravel with dirty, black slime resembling used motor oil with 10,000 miles on it. ...

In high tide, the oil crawls up the beaches, laying on a new coat of swill that is smothering kelp, eel grass, mussels and clams. When the tide departs, it leaves birds and sea otters. Death clenches most of the animals. The oil stiffened them into a black mass barely distinguishable from the rocks. It suffocated some, starved some by killing their food and poisoned some with its toxins. ...

The worst ones to see are those found alive. For then the otters lie on their backs, rubbing their eyes or licking their stomachs, trying to groom themselves clean of the oil. The birds hunker down, too weak and too heavy with oil to stand. Their wings tremble in apparent effort at flight.

The Night When East Met West

By Gordon Lewis

BERLIN—The crowd in the restricted area had now grown into the thousands. People began to chant, "We want in." Everyone joined in. The border guards appeared nervous at this point; appar-

November 22

ently they had not received any orders. The

crowd sensed this and pushed forward toward the first of the red-and-white-striped barriers blocking the way, then we all climbed over.

My wife and I were both nervous, but there was no way we or anyone at the front could stop the surge. The next barrier came and went, the border guards retreating, until we reached a steel-barred fence on the eastern side.

Ahead of us, under the dim yellow lights of East Berlin, a line of cars extended as far as the eye could see, and pedestrians stood in line by the thou-

sands. Everyone began chanting, "We want in! We want in!" Behind us the crowd continued to push.

And then the impossible happened. The East German border guards opened the gates. With a roar we ran into East Berlin. The East Germans cheered and laughed, not believing their eyes. A film of us storming the gate made the world news, with reporters claiming the pictures were of East Germans going to the West. But it was the other way around. The citizens of the GDR were orderly and extremely patient. As one man, Holger, a student from Zwickau, a town on the Polish border, told me later, "That was one line we were happy to stand in." ...

In those early-morning hours governments and authority had ceased to exist. It was a moment of timelessness between two eras. As my wife said when we ran toward the Brandenburg Gate, "We are about to enter the Twilight Zone." ■

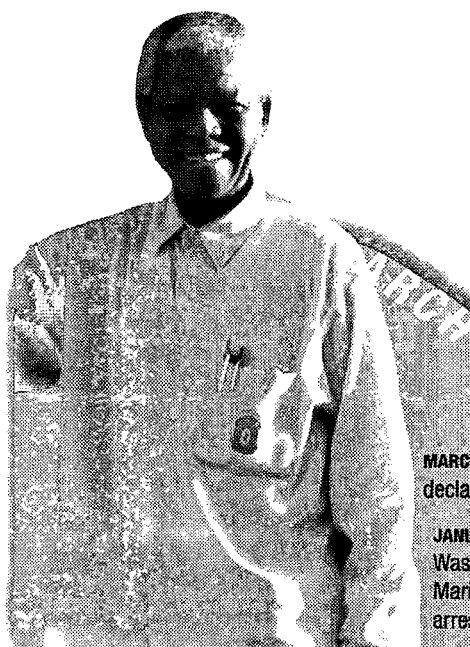
1000 Overkill

FREE AT LAST

By James North

Years of struggle lie ahead. But for now, the world can marvel in awe at an erect old man who, after white people had confined him for 27 years, emerged and repeated, with obvious conviction, the words he had first voiced as a vigorous 45-year-old: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

February 21



By James Weinstein

Saddam Hussein's lightning invasion of Kuwait has created the first post-Cold War crisis. This aggression threatens to destabilize the Mideast and lead to a disastrous war in the region. The threat is not

August 29

only, or even primarily, to the world's oil supplies. Hussein's move flouts international law and order at a time when the former superpowers are losing influence over the actions of their one-time clients. Recognizing the dangers inherent in this situation, the major powers quickly came together in the United Nations to give near-unanimous approval of an embargo on Iraq. For the first time since the United Nations' founding in 1945, East and West acted decisively to impose sanctions on an aggressor nation.



So far, so good. But the Bush administration, clinging to its Cold War habits, has continued to act as if we are—and should be—the world's policeman. By invading Kuwait, Hussein provided President Bush with an opportunity to reassert U.S. world dominance and to rescue the military-industrial complex from its long overdue dismantlement. And Bush has seized the time. □

Publish and Perish

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

As barriers to freedom of expression fall around the world, here at home a major voice for human rights and diversity of expression was silenced when Pantheon Books was gutted by corporate managers on February 26.

The savaging of Pantheon shows why, under the current system, censorship is not necessary to suppress unfashionable or dissident opinion.

March 14

Elimination of the vehicles of expression will come, indirectly, to the same thing. And the "invisible hand" never gets dirty.

Pantheon was one of the last enclaves of serious publishing of history and culture for a general audience. It stood, over its 47 years, in the shrinking arena between cat calendars and the increasingly vanity-press world of academic publishing. ...

In the absence of any public policy that recognizes the special role of the media in democracy, it will be difficult to do more than mourn the loss of such institutions. In the current brass-knuckles world of book publishing, any obligation to preserve and nurture cultural resources goes unrecognized.

MARCH 11 Lithuania declares independence.

JANUARY 18 Washington Mayor Marion Barry arrested.

MAY 24 Judi Bari and Daryl Cherney car-bombed in Oakland.

MAY 29 Boris Yeltsin elected as president of Russian republic.

OCTOBER 3 Germany re-unified.

NOVEMBER 25 United Nations approves use of military force in Iraq.

JANUARY 16 U.S. bombing begins the Gulf War.

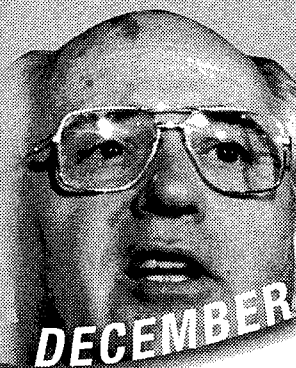
MARCH 15 Four Los Angeles police officers indicted in the beating of motorist Rodney King.

JUNE 17 Apartheid policy repealed in South Africa.

AUGUST 18 Soviet hardliners launch failed coup attempt.

OCTOBER 15 Senate confirms the Supreme Court nomination of Clarence Thomas.

DECEMBER 25 Gorbachev resigns, ending USSR; Yeltsin handed control of Russia's nuclear arsenal.



TEAMSTER PLAYER

By David Moberg

At the Roadway barn, Ron Carey chatted with Joe Smith, a truck driver for 31 years.

February 27

"So you're Ron Carey," Smith said. "You've got a lot of support. It's bad, what's going on now in the union."

"People feel suppressed about their feelings," Carey replied.

"I'm glad to see the election coming, so we'll be able to voice our opinion. Maybe we'll shake the bushes ..."

"... and see what falls out."

"It's always good to see new blood. We've been declining year by year. We're looking for support from our union. We're tired of having the union officials say, 'Be glad you've got a job.'"

1991

Gary Sick

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

When asked about allegations of the October Surprise in 1988, you said you doubted whether any such deal took place. What first led you to reconsider your skepticism?

It has been a slowly growing process, a slow accumulation of information and evidence. There is no point like Saul on the road to Damascus where suddenly the light flashed on and I said, "That's it." As opposed to the smoking gun theory, where you come up with a piece of evidence that absolutely proves that this happened, I see this as putting pieces of a mosaic together. You stand back and look at it, and the pieces fit together. You have a lot of blank spaces, but nevertheless there is a picture there. Eventually, enough pieces were filled in, and I looked at it and said, "It is very difficult for me to believe that this is really a picture of something else."

November 27

Race and Candor

By Salim Muwakkil

A new candor about race is at large. Taboos are tumbling from the left to the right, and suddenly Americans are expressing long-forbidden thoughts about racial matters.

Not surprisingly, this new mood has provoked much anxiety among those who fear it is premature to relax cultural constraints against an evil

May 22

not fully exorcised from the country's psyche. The embers of racism can too easily be inflamed by any skillful demagogue, they warn. Although they are clearly on the defensive, those people who urge the retention of selective social taboos—most of whom are on the left—have become demonized as

promoters of political correctness. Yet the full-blown furor now raging around the notion of PC is actually a rear-guard action. The right has already won the high ground this time around in America's ongoing culture war. ...

Instead of co-opting the conservative message—as adroit conservatives have done with liberal themes such as "color-blindness" and "empowerment"—the left dug in its ideological heels. ... Because of the left's reluctance to engage in the debate and provide context, words such as "quota," "crime" and "welfare" in recent years became highly charged euphemisms for matters of race. And by leaving conservatives alone to frame those important issues, the left now finds itself isolated. ■

The Case for Intervention in the Balkans

By Paul Hockenos

A full-scale, international military intervention in the former Yugoslavia, I am convinced, is the only alternative that remains to halt the barbarism enveloping the entire Balkans. A quick, decisive invasion of Bosnia-Herzegovina—on the scale of Operation Desert Storm—is an option the left should rally around as forcefully as any issue since opposition to the Vietnam War.

The six-month-old war has already claimed more than 50,000 lives and turned 2.5 million Bosnians into refugees. Each new report about the savagery loose

in the former republic seems more inconceivable than the last. No longer can foreign observers feign ignorance about the war's carnage and the bestial crimes of its combatants, about the concentration camps and the massacres, about the mass rapes and the torture. If the Serbian siege of Bosnian cities and the "ethnic cleansing" of non-Serb communities continues into the winter—which it will—the body count is expected to soar into the hundreds of thousands. That suffering, however, is only a hint of what's to come should international inaction give in to the designs of Serbia's nationalist henchmen. ■

October 28

Snapshots of a World Coming Apart at the Seams

BY EDUARDO GALEANO

"We can be like them," proclaims the giant neon sign on the road to development. The Third World will become the First World. It will be rich and happy, as long as it behaves itself and does what it's told.

But "what cannot be, cannot be, and besides, is impossible," as the bullfighter Pedro el Gallo said so well. If the Third World produced and squandered as much as the rich countries, our planet would perish. Already acid rain kills our forests and lakes. Toxic waste poisons our rivers and seas. In the South, agro-industry rips both trees and humans from their roots. With delirious enthusiasm, mankind is sawing the branch on which it is seated.

February 5

1992

JANUARY FEBRUARY JUNE

JANUARY 8 George Bush nominates Japanese prime minister.

FEBRUARY 7 European Union pact signed at Maastricht, Holland.

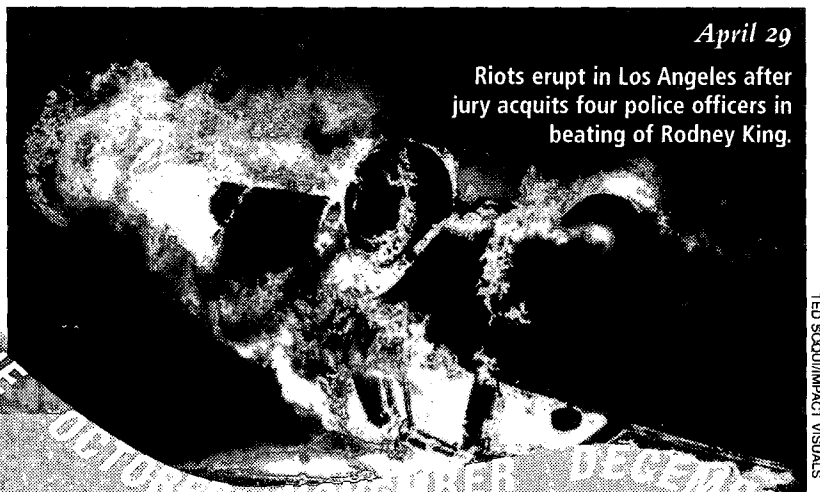
JUNE 14 More than 150 nations sign treaties to prevent global warming and protect biological diversity at Rio Earth Summit.

OCTOBER 31 Vatican panel absolves Galileo of heresy.

NOVEMBER 4 Bill Clinton wins the presidency.

DECEMBER 9 Bush deploys U.S. troops to Somalia.

DECEMBER 24 Bush pardons Iran-Contra conspirators.



April 29

Riots erupt in Los Angeles after jury acquits four police officers in beating of Rodney King.

TED SOO/IMPACT VISUALS

THE MORNING NAFTA

By David Moberg

The low road to President Clinton's victory on NAFTA was paved with political payoffs. But his high-road message appealed to nationalistic pride: Aren't we Americans confident of our ability to compete in the world, especially against a poor little country like Mexico?

The popular anxiety about NAFTA, however, was not about whether "we" can't compete, but about who "we" are. Increasingly, the average American thinks that when corporate leaders use "we," they are speaking only of themselves. Worries

December 13

about NAFTA reflect a distrust, most pronounced among working people, that corporations will willingly jettison or threaten U.S. employees if they have an

overseas opportunity to pay lower wages, avoid environmental and safety regulations, or escape public responsibilities.

This broadly based conviction is not just an expression of "insecurity" that can be pacified with promises of health security and job retraining, as the Clinton administration suggested. It reflects a deep, new fissure in the American sense of identity as a nation—as well as a growing sense of powerlessness over the economic forces that shape many people's lives. ...

At the same time, the campaign against NAFTA opened up a new internationalism. It's striking how many Americans have come to realize that protection of their jobs and standard of living depends on expanding the political, labor and human rights of people in countries like Mexico—and in raising wages throughout the world. ■

May 31

Killer Beef

BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

Mad cow disease, scientifically known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), is a ... degenerative disease of the brain caused by a virus-like agent. The disease, which is found in mammals, has no known cure, is always fatal, can be contracted by eating an infected animal and ... resists normal sterilization methods. It is thought that British cows contracted BSE from eating protein feed made from rendered sheep, some of which were infected with scrapie. ...

Officials in London have tried to quell public anxiety by denying that BSE poses a threat to public health, but the British aren't buying it. Surveys show that only 2 percent believe what their government tells them about the food they eat. And in the case of BSE, much of what the British government has asserted in the past has turned out to be wrong.

Unfortunately, a similar tale of bureaucratic stonewalling is being played out in the United States. The official government position is that BSE has not infected American cattle, but some scientists who have studied the disease believe otherwise.

The Guns of October

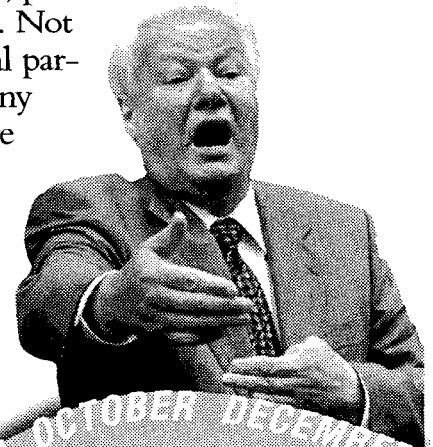
By Fred Weir

MOSCOW—The flames that engulfed the Russian parliament building may have also destroyed Russia's four-year-old experiment with democracy. Russia is reverting to a police state. Opposition newspapers, parties and movements have been banned. Not

October 18

only the national parliament, but many local councils are

being closed down by armed troops. None of this was inevitable. Until quite literally the last moment there was ample ground for compromise between Yeltsin and his parliamentary foes—until a storm of gun-fire blew it away.



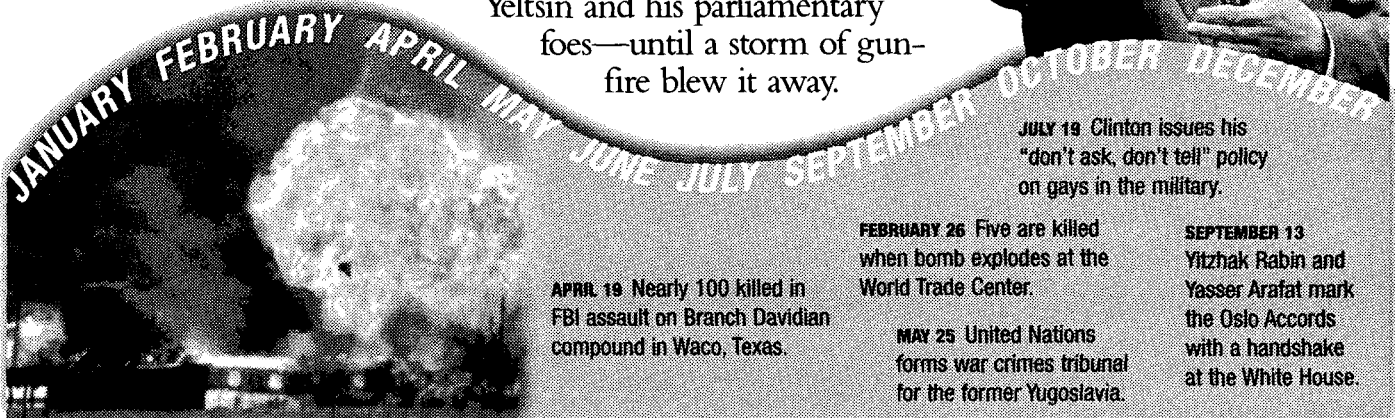
JULY 19 Clinton issues his "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military.

FEBRUARY 26 Five are killed when bomb explodes at the World Trade Center.

SEPTEMBER 13 Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat mark the Oslo Accords with a handshake at the White House.

APRIL 19 Nearly 100 killed in FBI assault on Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.

MAY 25 United Nations forms war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.



JANUARY 1 Zapatistas launch their rebellion in Chiapas.

MAY 10 Nelson Mandela sworn in as president of South Africa.

NOVEMBER 9 Republicans regain control of Congress for first time in 40 years; California voters pass Proposition 187.

DECEMBER 11 Russian troops roll into Chechnya.

SEPTEMBER 19 U.S. troops land in Haiti.

APRIL 6 Hutu extremists begin the genocide of more than 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

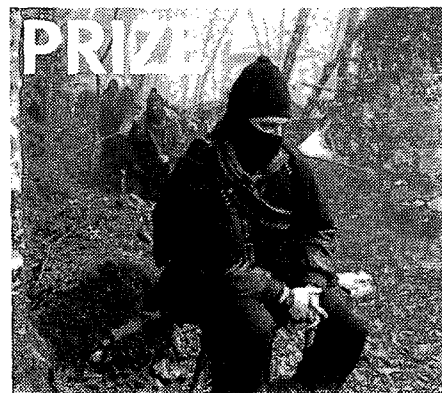
By Dan La Botz

CHIAPAS, MEXICO—As the sun set, Subcomandante Marcos, the now famous mestizo spokesman for the Zapatistas' indigenous army, appeared on the amphitheater stage. Along with an indig-

nous leader of the EZLN, Major Tacho, he

welcomed the delegates. Reverting to the poetic speech that has filled his widely published communiques from Chiapas, Marcos explained that the meeting site had been "a fort, a bunker, an armament factory, a military training center, an arms depot." But now it was transformed into "Noah's Ark, a Tower of Babel, the woodland ship of Fitzcarraldo, the raving neo-Zapatismo, the pirate ship." ...

A contingent of EZLN soldiers marched before the delegates. The crowd sat in awed silence, watching the soldiers pass by, shaking their heads at the little .22



ANTONIO TURK

rifles and ancient shotguns carried by the EZLN troops. What was impressive was certainly not the military might of this outfit, but the audacity and imagination of these soldiers who had seized the political initiative from the perfect dictatorship.

If there had been some feeling that Marcos and the EZLN were perhaps a throwback to the Communist guerrilla movements of the '70s, that idea was dismissed when Marcos displayed the Mexican flag. ... The entire convention then sang the Mexican national anthem. ■

May 2

Sell the Kids for Food

BY SCOTT MCLEEMEE

Kurt Cobain had not been dead long at all before his suicide was transformed into a media fetish. His body was discovered on a Friday. By the next Monday, his face was on the cover of *Newsweek*. Give it a few months and every Kurt Cobain demo tape, every stray guitar squeak, will be available as part of a CD boxed set.

But in the meantime, the suicide has served as the latest symbolic commodity on the market, distributed by the Twentysomething Anguish Division of Culture Industry Inc. A few hours after Cobain's body was discovered, the *Washington Post* had located some interview subjects who knew the Generation X script well enough to say what they were supposed to: "He killed himself for the same reason I'd kill myself. We lack something. We have no core."

Get a clue, kids. Suicide is not a tattoo. Putting a 12-gauge to one's head and pulling the trigger is not a statement of protest. And the manner in which Cobain chose to end his life is not incidental: He meant to get the job done. He obeyed a compulsion—emerging from unknown sources within a deeply wounded personality—to die.

In brief, Kurt Cobain's final exit had no connection whatsoever with the grungewear you bought last month at The Gap.

Muddy Waters

BY ROBERT PARRY

From the start, the Whitewater inquiry has lacked both proportionality and fairness. Republicans, who ignored grave violations of law and ethics under presidents Reagan and Bush, have feigned horror over some real, some trivial and some imagined offenses by Bill and Hillary Clinton. While the unadorned truth about the Clintons in Arkansas is unflattering, Whitewater has always been less a scandal than a political strategy to enable the Republicans to regain control of the government. ...

The GOP accusers seemed a strange lot for throwing stones. Alfonse D'Amato knows the inside of the Senate Ethics Committee like a delinquent student knows the principal's office. Still, he took the lead in lecturing Clinton aides on the fine points of honesty and ethics. When D'Amato's time expired, Phil Gramm stepped up to hurl more rocks, despite his own glass-house relationship with an S&L in Texas.

The GOP's hypocrisy, of course, does not absolve the Clintons from criticism. But in the Whitewater affair, Republicans have shown a dedication to destroying a sitting president—both politically and personally—that has few equals in American history. With the selection of conservative partisan Kenneth Starr as special prosecutor, that GOP campaign has entered a dangerous new phase.

Heeding the Call

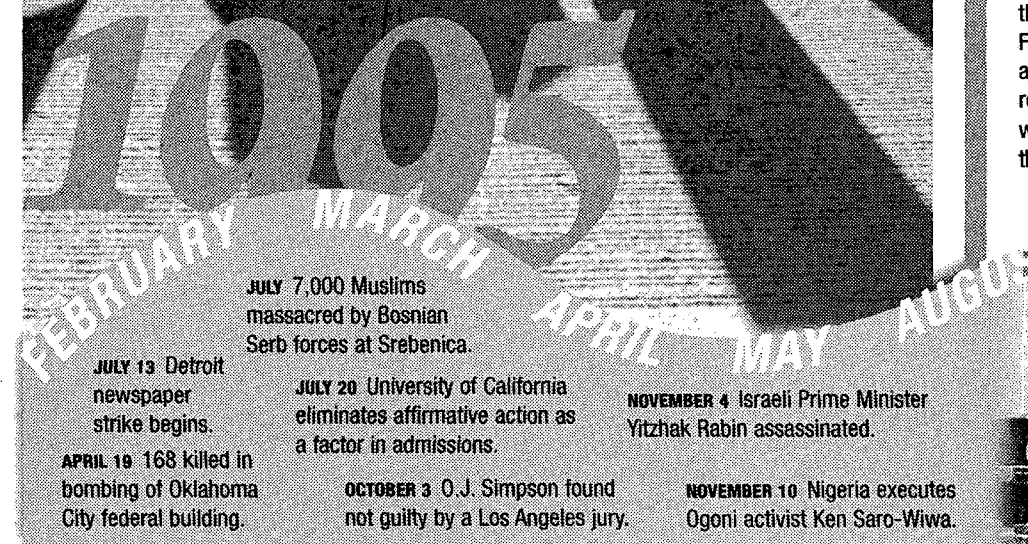
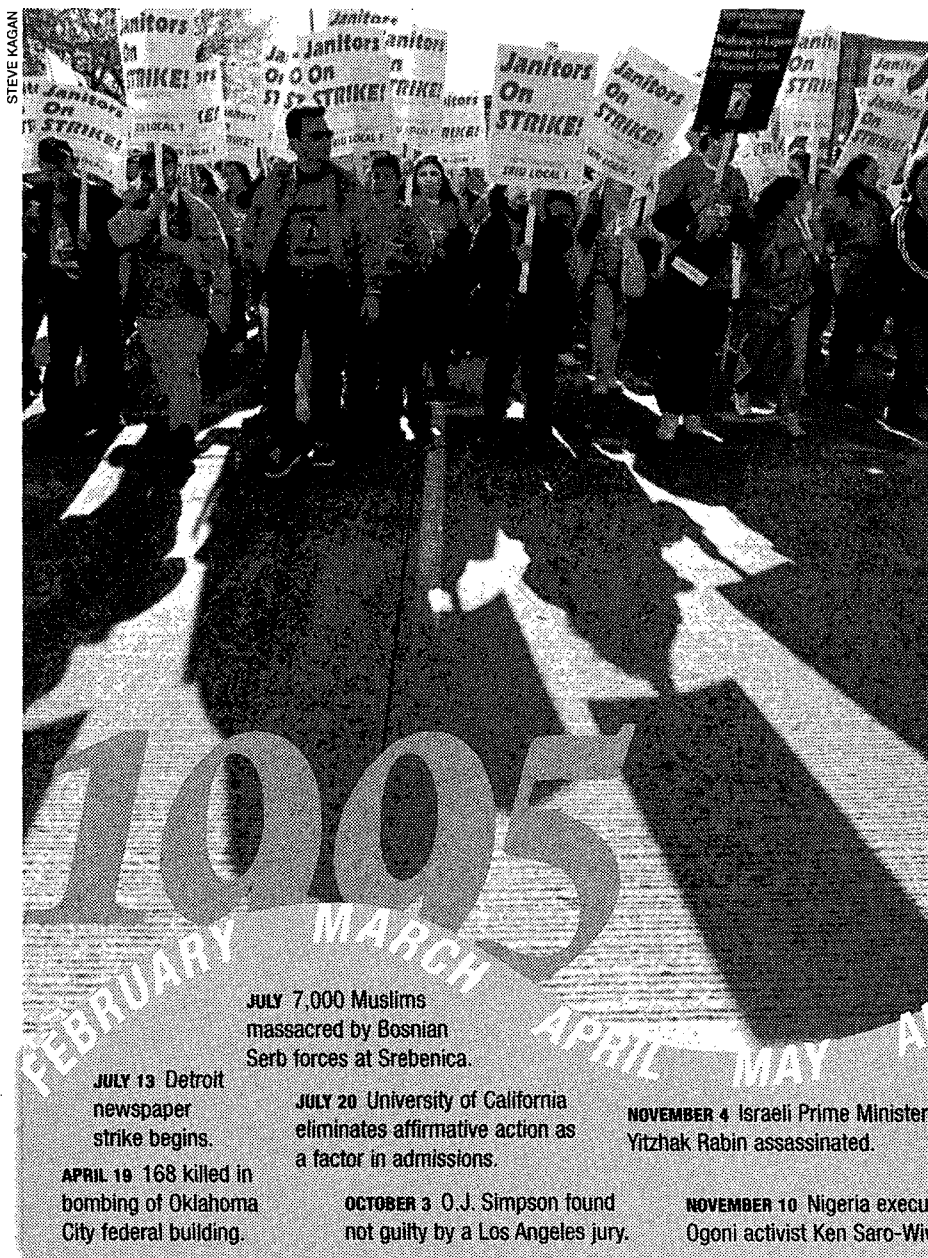
By David Moberg

NEW YORK—Echoing John L. Lewis' words from years ago, United Mine Workers Vice President Cecil Roberts

November 13

urged union delegates to "heed the call" of America's working men and women to bring new leadership to the AFL-CIO. The crowd, many wearing red "new voice" T-shirts or waving signs for "change," broke out in a chant of "heed the call," an outburst of enthusiasm worlds away from the mood of ritual consent at previous conventions. ...

John Sweeney quickly made clear that he wants to make workers' concerns the center of American political and economic life. The solution to "shrinking paychecks, disappearing jobs, vanishing health care, increasing inequality and more racism, rancor and resentment," Sweeney told the convention after his election, "is a bigger, stronger labor movement. ... If anyone denies American workers their constitutional right to freedom of association, we will use old-fashioned mass demonstrations as well as sophisticated corporate campaigns to make workers rights the civil rights issue of the '90s." ■



October 30

Face the Nation

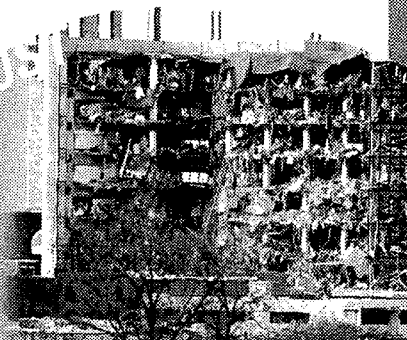
BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Early on August 28, 1963, I joined a few friends from northern New Jersey for a trip down the turnpike to Washington, where, rumor had it, thousands of women would be assembled. Those rumors were correct, and when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made his historic "I Have a Dream" speech, I was busy with other concerns; I missed the moment. But despite my lack of attention, the 1963 March on Washington had an indelible effect on my political consciousness. The spirit of camaraderie and common purpose I felt that day still tempers my occasional bouts of pessimism.

I went to Washington again this month for the Million Man March, and the event's purpose was underlined by a sad realization: I'm the last one left alive of the five friends who made the 1963 trip. All of them fell victim to one of black America's contemporary plagues, afflictions so dire that even moderate voices are shouting about our "endangered" status.

Concerns about that status and its implications propelled hundreds of thousands of black men to gather in the nation's capital on a chilly Monday in mid-October. The huge gathering shocked many Americans into recognizing that an enormous racial rift still divides the country. ...

Many Americans took the Million Man March as an indication of just how wide the chasm has grown. While mainstream pundits fulminated over the prominence of Minister Louis Farrakhan in the event and urged abstention for that reason, they were resolutely ignored by the black men who poured into the city from across the country.



FEBRUARY 8 Clinton signs Telecommunications Act of 1996.

MARCH 12 Clinton signs the Helms-Burton Act, punishing foreign companies doing business with Cuba.

APRIL 24 Clinton signs the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

MAY 27 AFL-CIO kicks off its first "Union Summer" at Yale University.

AUGUST 21 Clinton signs Republican bill to "end welfare as we know it."

AUGUST 18 *San Jose Mercury-News* publishes first of Gary Webb's "Dark Alliance" series.

NOVEMBER 5 Clinton re-elected.

Textual Reckoning

By Thomas Frank

Almost from its inception, the playful practice of poststructuralism has been dogged by a curious sense of its own absurdity. The high theorists of the genre often veer toward—and sometimes beyond—high silliness.

May 27 There's something about the field's combination of nearly incomprehensible jargon, its grand claims of subversiveness and its practitioners' air of self-importance and professorial correctness that makes it a natural, even obligatory, target of parody and farce. A discipline that makes much of puns and cleverness, it issues a standing challenge to the prank-inclined: I dare you to outwit me. ...

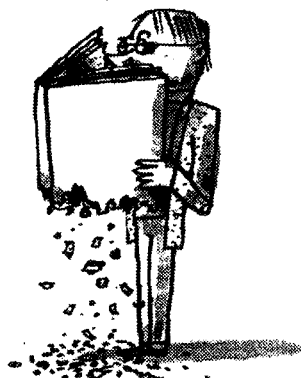
This is why most of the professors and graduate students I know reacted with giddiness when they heard about physicist Alan Sokal's admission in *Lingua Franca* that his article on postmodern science that appeared in the Spring/Summer 1996 issue of *Social Text*, the respected journal of cultural studies and theory, was in fact a hoax. Sokal's essay bears all the earmarks of a classic prank: Plausible enough on the surface to get by *Social Text's* panel of respected

academic editors, it is spotted as a hoax immediately by those who are more skeptical of the magazine's mission.

Titled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," it conforms to the genre's conventions with a hilariously studied slavishness. Sokal carefully includes the usual pious references to the "subversive" power of interdisciplinarity; he takes pains to flatter and agree with the editors of *Social Text* and goes out of his

way to assail their usual targets; he summons the usual barrage of references and quotations, many of them predictably impenetrable; and he closes with confused calls for an "emancipatory mathematics" and "a liberatory postmodern science."

"I confess, I don't understand half of the jargon I used," Sokal says. "But that's part of the point, that one can get an article accepted and look like an expert even if you don't understand what you're talking about." ■



PETER HANNAN

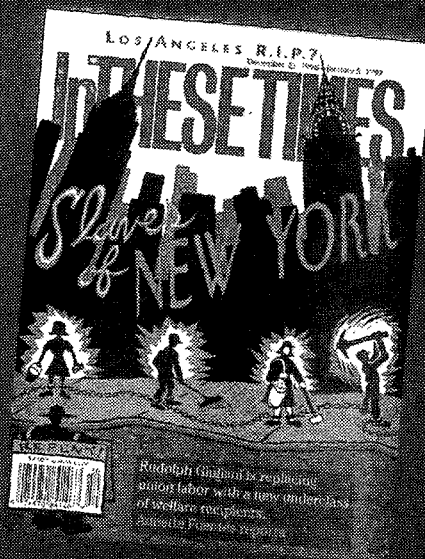
Slaves of New York

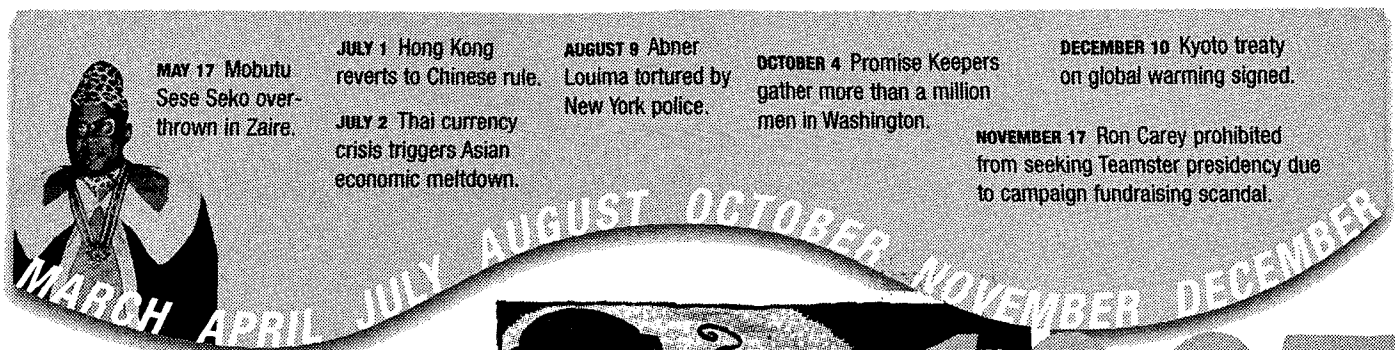
BY ANNETTE FUENTES

In 1995, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani launched the country's largest, most ambitious workfare program, designed to move thousands of adult welfare

recipients into low-skilled jobs in exchange for their weekly checks. Called the Work Experience Program (WEP), it has injected a total of 100,000 workers into virtually every corner of the municipal labor force over the past two years. Riding the crest of anti-welfare sentiment, Giuliani has garnered accolades aplenty for WEP from the usual suspects. *Newsweek* put Giuliani on the cover of its November 11 issue, heralding him as "the most hated, successful mayor in America" because "crime has plummeted, workfare is working." ...

While the ostensible purpose of WEP is to force people on welfare to "give back" something to the city, the unstated and undeniable effect of WEP is to break the back of labor unions. Viewed together with Giuliani's drive to privatize public services, the WEP program is a frontal assault on the most basic tenets of unionism: equal pay for equal work, a safe working environment and the right to organize.





Multi-Mediocrity

By Ana Marie Cox

It's half-time for the World Wide Web and as the Tofflers lead a third wave around the stadium, the players on the field—husky content providers and

January 20

HTML-soaked desk jockeys—seem slightly

bewildered. In all the pregame hype, someone forgot to tell them what game they would be playing. Is the Web an interactive medium, CB radio with pictures? Or is it a multimedia gold mine, a TV that takes a charge card? ...

The prodding of Lotus pitchman Denis Leary to "use the Internet for something useful, like running a business ... just raw, naked, in-your-face capitalism" seems strangely beside the point. While rawness and nakedness abound, the Web has yet to show any



signs of success at "running a business," let alone providing "something useful."

Newcomers lured to the infotainment highway soon discover that most of the roadside attractions are run-down and rickety. There are still more family-pet homepages than reliable magazine archives; the blinking tags and off-the-rack, tiled backgrounds still turn what might be useful prose into glaucoma-inducing speed bumps. Corporate sites promise (and generally deliver) detailed information on Olestra and prescription herpes ointment. There are several versions of the "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" game. ■

In Maggie's Closet

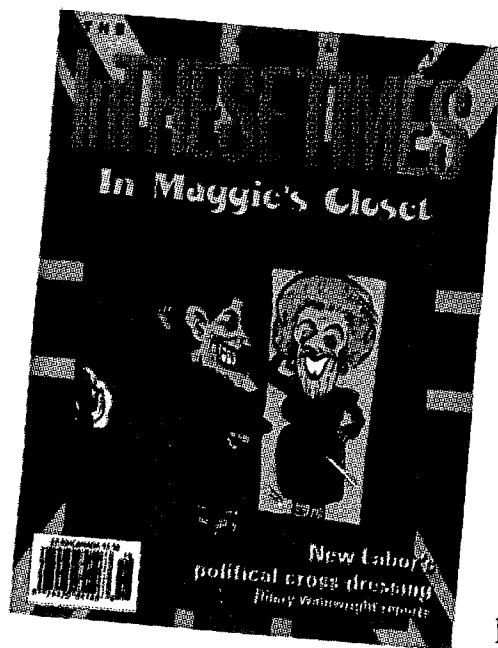
By Hillary Wainwright

Political cross-dressing—from left to right—has become common in mainstream political parties

May 12

these days. But in

Britain, it has taken an extreme form. Tony Blair, the managerially minded young lawyer who has led the Labour Party since John Smith's sudden death in 1994, has done everything short of having the operation to become Mrs. Thatcher.



June 30

The Big Payback

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

In 1947, the United States pledged \$13.3 billion—the equivalent of nearly \$90 billion in today's dollars—to help reassemble the remnants of 16 European countries (including Germany) shattered by the war. The grants, low-interest loans and currency transfers that the plan funneled to crippled European countries between 1948 and 1951 sparked one of history's most amazing economic recoveries. Winston Churchill called it "the most unsordid act in history."

The orgy of self-congratulation that accompanied the Marshall Plan's 50th anniversary has led some African-Americans to question why the U.S. government hasn't undertaken a similar effort on their behalf. After all, they see obvious parallels between their predicament and that faced by Europe 50 years ago. Conditions in the nation's most depressed urban black communities are often compared to the ravages of war. And as long as these conditions are allowed to deteriorate, they warn, American society faces grave danger.

They feel that they are owed their own Marshall Plan. Large-scale investment in black communities is good public policy, to be sure. But it is also just compensation for the most sordid act, to alter Churchill's phrase, in American history: slavery.

December 27

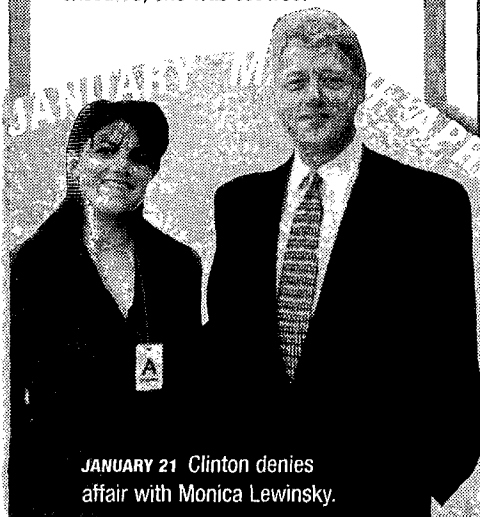
Innocence on Death Row

BY CRAIG AARON

By the time you are reading this, the United States probably has executed its 500th prisoner since 1976. If not, it's just a matter of days before Oklahoma, Texas, South Carolina or Arkansas straps Tuan Nguyen, Joseph Faulder, Joe Truesdale, Robert Robbins or another of the nation's more than 3,500 Death Row inmates onto the gurney or into the electric chair and kills them.

Number 500 easily could have been any one of the 29 former Death Row inmates who nervously lined up backstage at the National Conference of Wrongful Convictions and the Death Penalty on November 14. Each of these men and women were once sentenced to die; some came within hours of being executed—all were innocent. They each spent years, and sometimes decades, on Death Row for crimes they didn't commit. Only with a stroke of lottery-like luck, divine intervention and a few good lawyers were they freed. One by one, they marched onto the stage, stepped up to the microphone and told the crowd, "If the state had gotten its way, I'd be dead today."

Since the Supreme Court overturned *Furman v. Georgia* in 1976 and reinstated the death penalty, 75 Death Row inmates have been completely exonerated and released. That means that for every seven prisoners executed, one was set free.



JANUARY 21 Clinton denies affair with Monica Lewinsky.

NUKING IT OUT

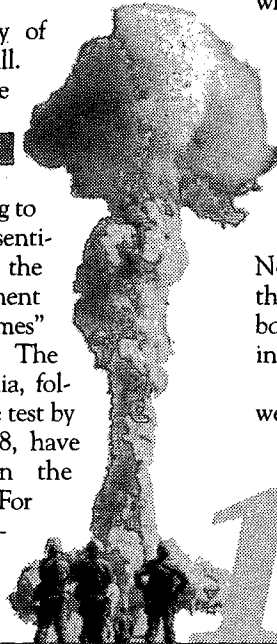
By Kalpana Sharma

NEW DELHI—Following India's five nuclear tests on May 11 and May 13, thousands of euphoric supporters of the ruling Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) planned to spread radioactive sand from the Rajasthan Desert all over the country. Fortunately, they were dissuaded.

But the absurdity of this gesture says it all. The BJP, which came

June 28

to power by appealing to regressive religious sentiments, is now using the quintessential statement of these "modern times" to assert its power. The nuclear tests by India, followed by at least one test by Pakistan on May 28, have altered security in the region permanently. For years, the world—and the Western powers in particular



—assumed that even if India and Pakistan had nuclear capability, they would not build weapons. ...

Within days of assuming office, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee gave the green light to Indian scientists. With most of the preparations already in place, it only required the prime ministerial nod—which two previous prime ministers had refused—to set the tests in motion. Why did the BJP choose this moment to do it? As he flew over the test site on March 20, Vajpayee told the press that the tests were the only way for India "to silence its enemies and to show its strength." ...

Within a week of the tests, people in New Delhi erected roadblocks to protest the lack of electricity. "You are making bombs," women shouted, "but not giving us water or electricity."

Neither Vajpayee, nor his colleagues, were listening. ■



Black Radicalism: Where Do We Go From Here?

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

All is not well in Black America. The gap between the rich and the poor is accelerating more rapidly among blacks than among Americans as a whole. There are the traditional problems of unemployment, miseducation, housing, which are worsening in many communities. ... Even as the economy booms, many indices of well-being among blacks continue to hover at dangerously low levels. For much of the past decade, the path out of this morass has been guided by those urging a back-to-the-future return to separate-but-equal, patriarchal family arrangements and moral salvation. The Black Radical Congress is an opportunity to chart a more engaging and empowering course toward a truly emancipatory politics.

APRIL 10 "Good Friday" agreement signed in Northern Ireland.

MAY 18 Justice Department and 20 states file antitrust suit against Microsoft.

MAY 21 Suharto relinquishes power in Indonesia.

AUGUST 8 U.S. embassies bombed in Kenya and Tanzania.

DECEMBER 5 James P. Hoffa elected Teamsters president.

DECEMBER 19 House votes to impeach Clinton.

iVieques Libre!

By Juan Gonzalez

This 20-mile-long island just off the east coast of Puerto Rico, a once-lush paradise, is now a denuded and contaminated indictment of American colonialism. Here on Vieques, an island most Americans have never heard of, a major political upheaval has erupted during the past few months, taking Washington by surprise and sparking unprecedented

unity among Puerto Rico's 3.8 million inhabitants. The conflict is rapidly turning into a battleground over the meaning of democracy and human rights, one that has the Pentagon's top brass scurrying to ward off a major defeat. ... So many protesters have moved into the area that the Pentagon has been forced to suspend all maneuvers. ...

Two Navy commanders went to Jesse Jackson's San Juan hotel room at 6 a.m. to plead their case. ... [They] spent half an hour explaining to the civil rights leader why the live-fire practice conditions on Vieques can't be replicated anywhere else in the world. "You guys don't get it," Jackson told them, shaking his head. "These people don't want you here." In the Philippines and in Panama, the people reached a point where they said the Navy must leave, Jackson told them. "Now they are saying it in Puerto Rico. It is undemocratic of us not to listen. Colonialism is a sin anywhere." ■

Colombia on the Brink

By Ana Carrigan

When Colombia's cities and landscape have been scorched and the 1.5 million internally displaced people (already

more than those driven from

Kosovo) have multiplied many times over; when Colombian refugees and their pursuers spill across the borders into neighboring countries, bringing violence and destabilization to the impoverished and fragile democracies of Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela and Panama; and when finally the war moves away, following the international drug trade as the traffickers shift their production centers south into Brazil or north into Panama, in eternal pursuit of the U.S. cocaine market: Who will calculate the cost of Colombia's destruction then?

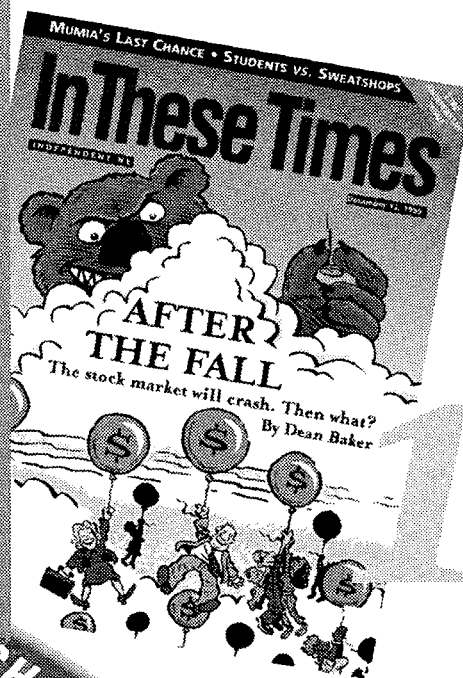
December 12

After the Fall

BY DEAN BAKER

Stock prices will plunge—it's just a question of when. Prices are determined by the psychology of investors. Their enthusiasm for stocks, no matter how irrational, may keep prices at inflated levels for six months, two years, even a decade. Economics and logic can't predict exactly when reality will catch up with this enthusiasm: They only assure that at some point it will. ...

In the wake of the crash, the whole relationship between the government and the market will have to be re-examined. New paths forward will be developed based on experimenting with new ideas and implementing old ones. But we should be sure that we never again trust the proselytizers of free-market capitalism at the Clinton Treasury, the Greenspan Federal Reserve Board and the IMF. These folks should be left in the dustbin of history, right alongside the central planners of the USSR.



1999



JANUARY 10 AOL and Time Warner announce \$165 billion merger.

APRIL 22 Elian Gonzalez reunited with his father in Cuba.

SEPTEMBER 29 New *intifada* begins in the Occupied Territories.

OCTOBER 5 Slobodan Milosevic forced from office.

DECEMBER 12 Supreme Court stops Florida recounts, naming George W. Bush president.

APRIL 16 10,000 anti-globalization protesters head to Washington.

JULY 2 Vicente Fox wins the Mexican presidency, ending 70 years of rule by the PRI.

After Seattle

By David Moberg

The "Battle in Seattle," pitting more than 35,000 protesters of staggeringly diverse backgrounds against the World Trade

Organization, ended in a striking victory for a popular movement that emerged with a stronger, more focused voice and a broad, sympathetic world audience.

The victory went beyond blocking the opening meeting of trade ministers from 135 countries and disrupting other WTO functions. The protests intensified the already deep-seated internal conflicts among different blocs of countries, leading to a dramatic failure by the WTO to launch a new round of trade talks. The protests also strengthened the bonds of many coalition partners and gave a dramatic boost to a movement that has been steadily growing and gaining clout.

After Seattle it will be difficult for any politician to talk about global economics without addressing links to labor rights, human rights, food supplies and the protection of both consumers and the environment. After Seattle it also will be critical that the protesters maintain their broad coalition, link up more with movements in developing countries, and define with greater clarity what they are for as well as what they are against. ...

At the turn of the last century, there was another movement of populists, progressives and socialists against laissez-faire capitalism and robber barons. "No one thought they had a chance," Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone reminded a labor audience in Seattle. "Their point was to civilize the national economy. We are here—a broad coalition—to civilize the global economy." ■



JOHN ZICHNEWSKIS

January 10

June 12

Star Wars: Episode II

BY JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

What's driving the bipartisan push for an increasingly unpopular new missile defense system that is extravagant, inept, unnecessary and destabilizing? You don't have to dig very deep to find an answer: Raytheon, TRW, Lockheed Martin and Boeing. Each of these firms has secured a lucrative sector of the Star Wars program.

Of course, the companies do have to make some political offerings. And they haven't been miserly. Together these four companies have flushed more than \$2.6 million to the two political parties in soft money alone since 1996. On top of that, the defense giants' PACs have sluiced \$3.7 million to federal candidates in the past three years, making the Star Wars coalition one of the prime sponsors of our political system. What money can't buy, direct persuasion often can. These four companies spent more than \$18 million lobbying Congress in 1998, sending out a legion of former senators, congressmen and retired Pentagon chieftains as their hired guns on the Hill.

This all gives a bracing new meaning to getting more bang for the buck.

Face Reality

EDITORIAL BY JOEL BLEIFUSS

If Nader were serious about influencing the national discourse, he would have run in the Democratic primary, where progressive candidates have an opportunity to present ideas that normally don't get a public hearing. By debating Al Gore and Bill Bradley, Nader could have reached an audience of millions. This year, more than any other, we needed a challenge to the somnambulant corporate centrism of Gore and Bradley. Absent a third party that is well organized from the grassroots up, progressives must stay focused on putting pressure on those Democrats who claim to represent them, something a Nader run for the Democratic nomination would have done admirably.

Since Nader and the progressives who support him have neither built a third party nor challenged the Democratic establishment, one must conclude that candidate Nader fulfills another role—that of civil confessor. Citizens disgusted with the status quo can leave a voting booth with their integrity reaffirmed. Their message is clear: We are not serious about political change. For too many on the left, electoral politics has devolved from civic participation into a lifestyle choice. One eats organic food to stay healthy, exercises to stay fit, and votes for Nader to avoid tainting principles with the give-and-take of real politics.

June 12

September 3

Defining Globalization

BY DAVID GRAEBER

What is called the anti-globalization movement (increasingly, people within it are just calling it the "globalization movement") is trying to change the direction of history—ultimately, the very structure of society—without resort to weapons. What makes this feasible is globalization itself: the increasing speed with which it is possible to move people, possessions and ideas around.

What politicians and the corporate press call "globalization," of course, is really the creation and maintenance of institutions (the WTO, G8 summits, the IMF) meant to limit and control that process so as to guarantee it produces nothing that would discomfit a tiny governing elite: Tariffs can be lowered, but immigration restrictions have to be increased; large corporations are free to take profits wherever and however they like, but any ideas about forms of economic organization that would not look like large profit-seeking corporations must be strictly censored, etc.

The threat of real global democracy is probably their greatest fear, and the unprecedented growth of the movement—Seattle was considered huge at 35,000 protesters; Genoa, a year and a half later, drew perhaps 200,000—must seem utterly terrifying.

Love Thy Neighbor

By Slavoj Žižek

So what about the phrase that reverberates everywhere, "Nothing will be the same after September 11"? Significantly, this phrase is never further elaborated—it's just an empty gesture of saying something "deep" without really knowing what we want

October 29

to say. So our reaction to this phrase should be: Really? Or is it rather that the only thing effectively changed was that America was forced to realize the kind of world it is part of? ...

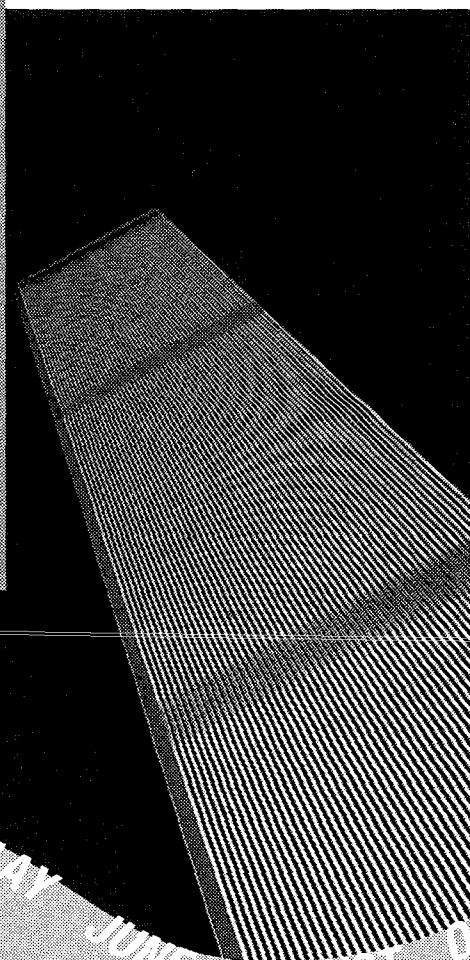
We don't yet know what consequences in economy, ideology, politics and war this event will have, but one thing is sure: The United States, which, until now, per-

ceived itself as an island exempted from this kind of violence, witnessing these kind of things only from the safe distance of a TV screen, is now directly involved.

So the question is: Will Americans decide to further fortify their sphere, or risk stepping out of it? America has two choices. It can persist in or even amplify its deeply immoral attitude of "Why should this happen to us? Things like this don't happen *here*," leading to even more aggression toward the outside world—just like a paranoid acting out. Or America can finally risk stepping through the fantasmatic screen separating it from the Outside ... and thus make the long-overdue move from "A thing like this should not happen *here*" to "A thing like this should not happen *anywhere*!"

Therein resides the true lesson of the attacks: The only way to ensure that it will not happen here again is to prevent it from going on *anywhere* else. America should learn to humbly accept its own vulnerability as part of this world, enacting the punishment of those responsible as a sad duty, not as an exhilarating retaliation. Even though America's peace was bought by the catastrophes going on elsewhere, the predominant point of view remains that of an innocent gaze confronting unspeakable evil that struck from the Outside. One needs to gather the courage to recognize that the seed of evil is within us too.

In his campaign for the presidency, George W. Bush named Jesus Christ as the most important person in his life. Now he has a unique chance to prove that he meant it seriously. For him, as for all Americans today, "Love thy neighbor" means "Love the Muslims." Or it means nothing at all. ■



STEVE KAGAN

MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

APRIL 9 Police shootings spark riots in Cincinnati.

APRIL 20 Anti-globalizers travel to Quebec to protest the FTAA.

MARCH 11 150,000 people greet the Zapatistas in Mexico City.

MAY 24 James Jeffords leaves Republican Party, handing control of the Senate to Democrats.

JUNE 7 Bush signs \$1.35 trillion tax cut.

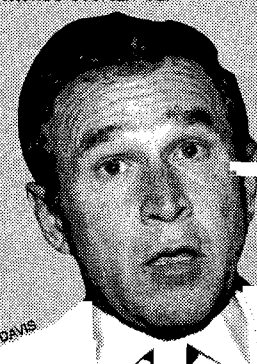
JUNE 11 Timothy McVeigh executed.

JULY 21 23-year-old anarchist Carlo Giuliani killed by Italian police during protests in Genoa.

OCTOBER 7 U.S. forces attack Afghanistan.

OCTOBER 26 Bush signs USA PATRIOT Act.

DECEMBER 19 Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence overturned.



JOEFF DAVIS



Anniversary Greetings



For a quarter century, *In These Times* has provided its readers news with nothing left out. The timeline on the previous pages testifies to the passion of our writers and editors to tell the stories other media outlets find unfit to print. Through the passage of those 25 years, and the flows and ebbs (mostly ebbs) of progressive politics, a few things have remained constant.

Transnational corporations remain the dominant force in American life—shaping our culture, corrupting our politics, subverting our humanity. The mainstream media, now owned by a handful of these corporations, continue to present the world from one highly refined lens. But *In These Times*' vision of

"liberty and justice for all," as it says on the masthead, has not changed either.

Our mission statement puts it this way: "*In These Times* is dedicated to reporting the news in accordance with the highest journalistic standards; to informing and analyzing popular movements for social, environmental and economic justice; and to providing an accessible forum for debate about the public policies that shape our future."

For the past 25 years, *In These Times* has made good on this commitment. And for the past 25 years, *In These Times* has never made a profit fulfilling that commitment. No surprise there. All journals of opinion operate at a loss. The magazine's survival has

always depended on the financial support of its readers—support bolstered by the independent wealth of its publishers. The biggest change as we celebrate our silver anniversary is that today no wealthy publisher is backing *In These Times*. If the magazine is going to survive for another 25 years, all of us—staff here in Chicago and supporters across the country—will have to work together to sustain the magazine's publication.

The publication of *In These Times* has always been made possible through the financial commitment of the following individuals and organizations. Join me in extending them the thanks and recognition they deserve.

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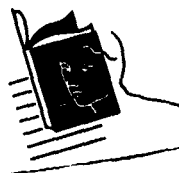
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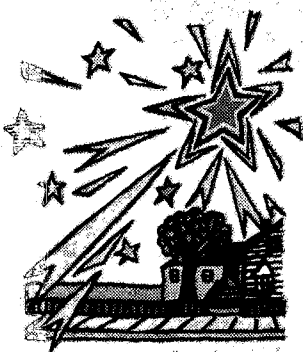
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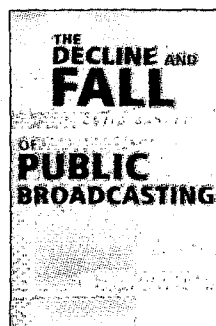
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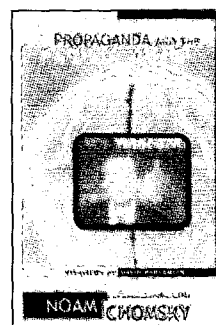


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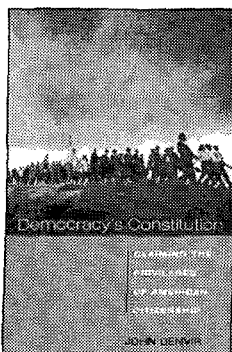


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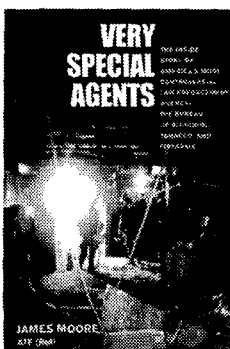


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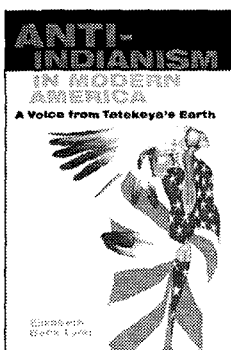


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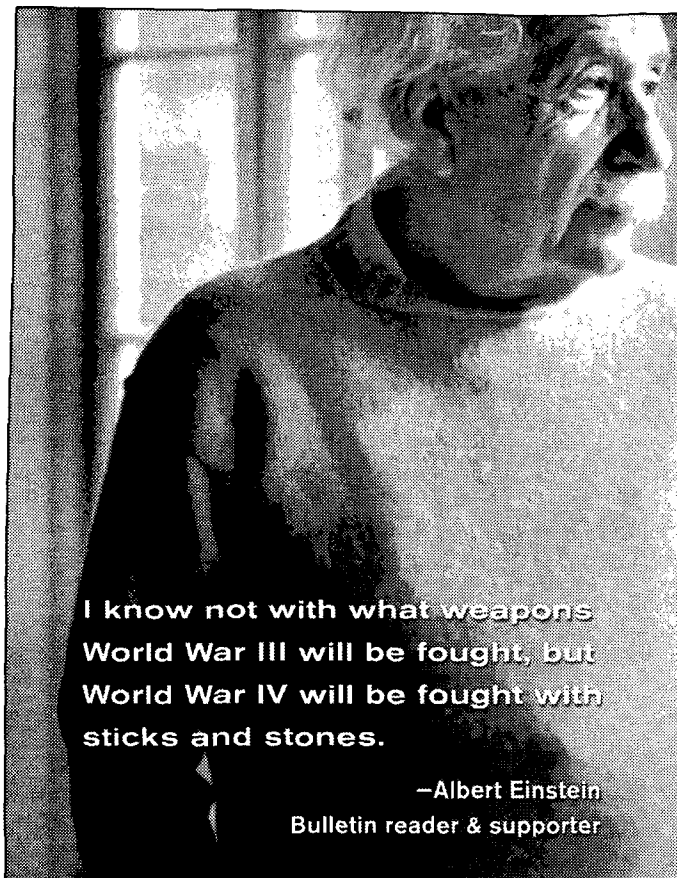
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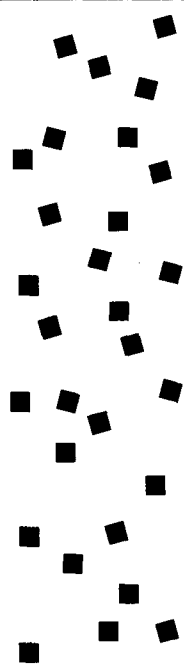
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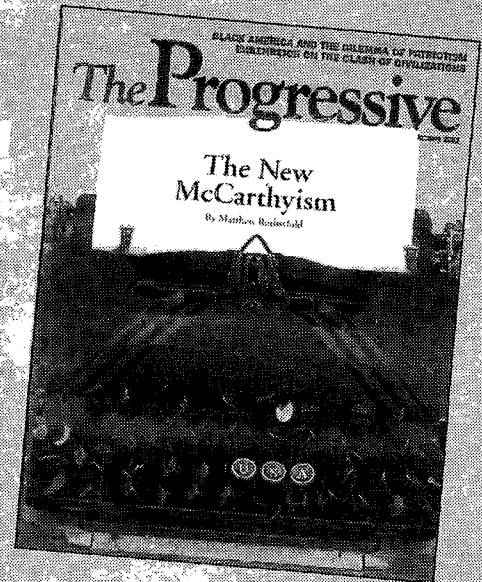
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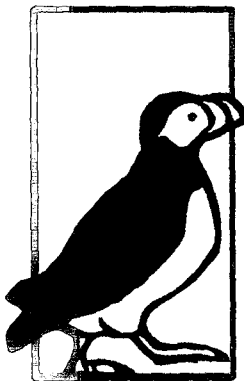
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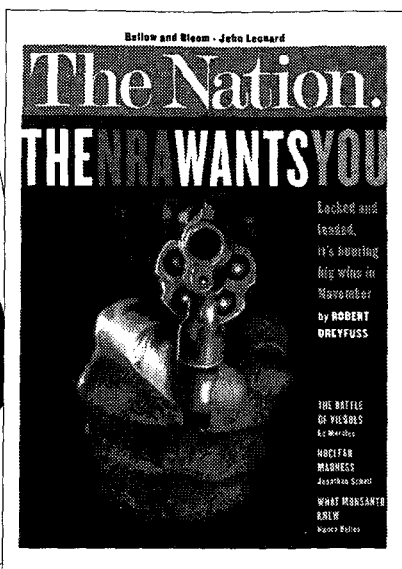
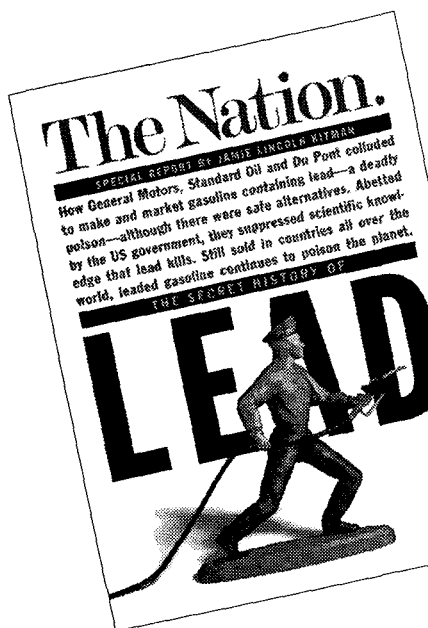
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Congratulations to *In These Times*

Follow the Money

By David Moberg

With little regard for the crescendo of well-reasoned skepticism from ordinary citizens and policy experts alike, the rich-country elite continues to blithely promote its agenda of globalization. It offers, as salvation for everything from recession to terrorism, more liberalization—that is, deregulation—of world finance and trade and more protection of corporate rights.

The fast flows of hot money that flattened Thailand and other countries in 1997 nearly generated a world financial meltdown and highlighted the perils of hypermobile capital. Now Argentina is in default on foreign debts and several other countries are on the brink of financial disaster, demonstrating once again the fragility of the global economy and the high toll that financial crises take, especially on the most vulnerable.

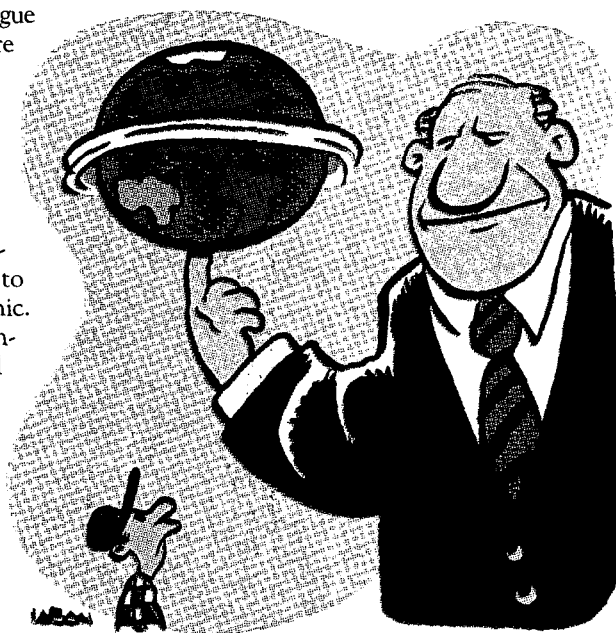
To demystify the world of global currency flows, Barbara Garson put her advance money for *Money Makes the World Go Around* into banks and a mutual fund and then followed it. While a small town bank finances understandable local business projects, Chase Manhattan often loans her dollars to other banks or to corporations for takeovers and stock buybacks, not tangible development projects. But Garson pursues her money trail, using

her own naivete as a way to introduce the reader in a chatty and charming way to the complicated world of global finance, eventually finding a Caltex oil refinery in Thailand partly financed with a Chase loan. She meets a sampling of migrant and Thai workers, who ultimately were hurt most by the Thai collapse.

In *The Chastening*, reporter Paul Blustein of the *Washington Post* intersects Garson's travelogue in finance-land at a more elevated level. He tracks International Monetary Fund officials as they botch the Asian economic crisis, worsening hardships in Thailand, Korea, Indonesia and elsewhere while trying to control the financial panic. The IMF officials seem dangerously ignorant of local conditions, dogmatically locked into inappropriate remedies and arrogantly removed from real-life consequences of their decisions. But what's striking in Blustein's engaging and revealing

narrative is how much the U.S. Treasury Department calls the tune for the IMF, how the United States insistently demands tough conditions for help, and how clearly U.S. policies serve the interest of big American banks and financial-services firms.

Asian economies that had been touted as great successes (despite political and economic shortcomings, some obvious, others concealed) were sud-



Books discussed in this essay:

Money Makes the World Go Around: One Investor Tracks Her Cash Through the Global Economy, from Brooklyn to Bangkok and Back
By Barbara Garson
Viking
342 pages, \$24.95

The Race to the Bottom: Why a Worldwide Worker Surplus and Uncontrolled Free Trade Are Sinking American Living Standards
By Alan Tonelson
Westview Press
222 pages, \$25

The Chastening: Inside the Crisis that Rocked the Global Financial System and Humbled the IMF
By Paul Blustein
PublicAffairs
431 pages, \$30

The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics
By William Easterly
MIT Press
342 pages, \$29.95

Empire
By Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri
Harvard University Press
504 pages, \$18.95

The Future in the Balance: Essays on Globalization and Resistance
By Walden Bello
Food First Books
264 pages, \$13.95

The Amoral Elephant: Globalization and the Struggle for Social Justice in the Twenty-First Century
By William K. Tabb
Monthly Review Press
224 pages, \$18

Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity
By Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith
South End Press
164 pages, \$13

denly blamed for the crises, but Blustein makes it clear that the primary culprit was the rapid outflow of short-term capital (mainly bank loans to private businesses) that had flooded into those countries. The boom and bust were both made possible because the United States had strongly pressured these countries to eliminate controls and open themselves to more foreign capital.

Although eventually—on the second try in Korea—the IMF managed to corral creditors into getting slow repayments rather than pulling their money out immediately, the bailouts protected the bankers from losses (and encouraged them to be reckless again) and crushed workers, peasants and domestic businesses. The “incredible hawks” at Treasury (in the words of one IMF official) were only interested in using the crisis to force their own socio-economic model on the countries.

Blustein concludes that “global capital markets have gotten so huge, so unruly, and so panic-prone” that the IMF can easily be overwhelmed. As remedies, he argues for taxes on short-term investment, “bail-in” schemes requiring private creditors to be part of any solution, and IMF power to impose a “standstill” during a bank panic. These worthy but modest measures, however, do not provide enough social control to make sure that global capital is tamed—an ox pulling the plow, not a wild bull in a china shop.

The mission of the World Bank, an often grudging partner of the IMF in bailing out troubled countries and imposing immiserating austerity, is supposed to be development and elimination of poverty, but by the bank's own admission it has failed about 60 percent of the time. William Easterly, a senior adviser at the bank, recounts in *The Elusive Quest for Growth* how he and others have often gone wrong in their search for a magic elixir that would generate economic growth. He contends that financial aid, investment in machinery, education, population control, loans and even debt forgiveness have rarely led to economic growth. His solution is misleadingly simple: Provide people with incentives to invest in their future.

During the Asian currency collapse, IMF officials proved to be dangerously ignorant of local conditions and arrogantly removed from their policies' real-life consequences.

Easterly acknowledges a role for government in creating incentives and providing basic infrastructure and services, but more often, he suggests, government in poor countries creates obstacles through corruption or bad policies. Yet his belief in the magic of free trade is not supported by the experience of most countries that have sustained economic take-off, especially the Asian countries that prospered with extensive intervention in, even violation of, free markets. Although many developing country governments are toadies of local economic elites or kleptocracies that block development, Easterly ignores how rich countries and multinationals use their power to determine prospects for development.

Easterly acknowledges inequality as a major barrier to development, but he pays little attention to the lack of democracy in poor countries. Even by his account, the experts do not know so much about economic and social development that they should be overriding local self-determination. Development, which he says may largely be a matter of luck, clearly relies on many complementary factors (including incentives), but we might as well encourage those things that are social goods in themselves, such as education, environmental protection, health, equality, democracy and human rights, many of which foster long-term growth.

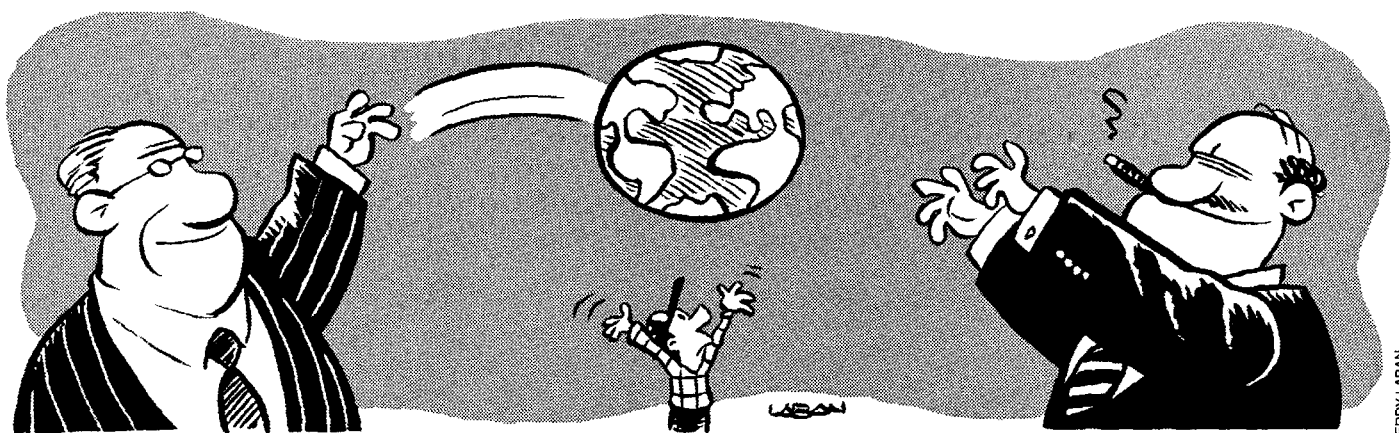
Walden Bello, a Filipino scholar-activist, thinks that the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization are so bankrupt that they cannot be reformed. Unlike advocates for an update of the Bretton Woods framework that shaped the postwar

international economic economy, Bello thinks it might be better to have no powerful central institutions, which he says only serve the interests of rich countries. Some of the critiques of these institutions in his latest collection of essays, *The Future in the Balance*, are now familiar to people who follow the anti-globalization movement in the United States, which Bello himself has played an important role in developing.

One of Bello's recurrent themes is criticism of U.S. unilateralism, and he applies it equally—sometimes without appropriate distinctions—to both the government and to movements in the United States. For example, although he calls himself an environmentalist, he attacks U.S. laws that try to impose environmental regulations on products and processes from developing countries (such as devices to prevent killing turtles while shrimping). He agrees with many American progressives that China should not be in the WTO, but he forcefully attacks the campaign to indirectly block China's entry. While he correctly criticizes the knuckleheaded alliance of Teamsters President James P. Hoffa and Pat Buchanan, he also glosses over legitimate progressive criticisms of China's ruling elite.

The multilateralism that Bello advocates is preferable but unattainable. The United States certainly has a flawed record (especially on labor rights), but unilateralism by labor, environmental and other movements in the United States—even by the government—can be justified as the best practical option. Too often Bello—who certainly knows better—fails to clarify that the policies he criticizes represent the United States acting, as usual, on behalf of corporate interests that are at odds with what American workers, small farmers, environmentalists and other citizens want.

Bello's defense of traditional development strategies, like protection of infant industries and focusing on growth of domestic markets, offers an important alternative to the Washington consensus. It also clashes in some ways with the argument in *Race to the Bottom* by Alan Tonelson, a research fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council, who is also a critic of contemporary globalization. While Bello sees the



TERRY LABAN

WTO as a tool of the rich countries, Tonelson implausibly describes the WTO as “anti-American” and “protectionist dominated.”

Tonelson argues that the entry of vast new low-wage labor markets into the global economy has driven down wages of American workers, including many skilled workers. These new workers are paid so little that they can’t buy much from the United States (or anyone); their governments often block imports from America; and the market for their products is overwhelmingly in the United States. The resulting trade deficit, unique to the United States among major trading countries or blocs, is unsustainable, he writes, and could ultimately lead to a global economic crisis.

Although he criticizes mercantilist or protectionist policies of countries like Japan, India and China, the real problem, in Tonelson’s analysis, is the changing nature of trade: At least 30 percent of all manufacturing trade involves shipping components to one country to be incorporated in goods that are then exported, often back to the original country. Much of that “trade” is within one firm. Increasingly the work in a low-wage country involves high-skilled work, even design, that might otherwise provide well-paid jobs in the United States. Tonelson’s concern for American workers is well documented, but he disregards the question of how poor countries can develop.

The root of the problem—for both Bello and Tonelson’s quite different but legitimate concerns—is the power of the multinationals to make decisions about investment without

accountability to workers, communities and governments.

Michael Hardt, a literature professor, and Antonio Negri, an imprisoned Italian leftist, might argue that these problems of globalization reflect a new “sovereignty”—which they label *Empire*—that has no boundaries, exists beyond history, rules social life intensively, and maintains peace with bloody hands. *Empire*, an irritating, often pompous work, is complex and erudite but also full of silly and contradictory arguments. The central thesis is that we are now in a new stage of capitalism, quite different from older colonialism or imperialism. While they argue that the state has been defeated and corporations rule the earth, *Empire* appears as a rarefied, ethereal, almost theological form of a state that rules everything—even if the United States has a “privileged” position, it is not in control.

At one point they argue that intellectual labor and the service or information economy, not factory work and physical production, are now central to capitalism; at other points they unpersuasively argue that at the center of the system are the poor or migrants, nomads, deserters and other “new barbarians” who constitute a new and powerful form of class struggle against *Empire*. Then they quite improbably argue that anti-globalist protesters are incapable of communicating with each other (at a time when a global movement is more alive and coordinated than in many decades) and celebrate individualist acts as effective rebellion. Elsewhere, they argue that the contradictory legacy of the Enlightenment is the problem and postmodernism the solu-

tion—with Islamic fundamentalism being offered as the (highly unappealing) prime example of such postmodernist revolt. For all the intellectual sparks and billowing clouds of obfuscatory smoke, there’s no real fire in this trendy treatise. (See “Where the Sun Never Sets” by J.W. Mason in the January 21 issue for a full dissection of *Empire*.)

The global order that has emerged since the ’70s is indeed different from preceding epochs of capitalism, but in *The Amoral Elephant*, William K. Tabb, a Queens College economist,

The effects of these frequent financial crises continue to hurt workers and the poor long after the official recovery.

much more accurately places globalization in a long history of capitalist development. Even with the presence of quasi-state organizations like the IMF, the United States still plays a powerful role as the central power, and states still have powers that they don’t always use, despite erosion by global corporations and markets.

Tabb, in a more prosaic way, does a much better job of accounting for the erosion of “national Keynesianism” and the remaking of states to serve transnational corporations. Even if globalization generates growth, he argues, it does not automatically serve the interests of workers or most citi-

zens; it does not fairly distribute the wealth; and it may lead to disruptions, inequity and interference with pursuit of social goals that overwhelm any gains in efficiency.

Tabb notes, much as recent Nobel laureate and former World Bank economist Joseph Stiglitz has also argued, that the negative effects of increasingly frequent economic crises hurt workers and the poor long after the official recovery: Economic processes, like destruction of industries or interruptions of education, are not easily reversible.

Like Tonelson, Tabb blames globalization for American workers' declining wages and for at least two-fifths of the rise in inequality since the early '70s, but he argues that the problem is not trade but the lack of standards. Tabb embraces Blustein's modest proposals for handling crises but also argues for a tiny Tobin tax on all global financial transactions, wider capital controls and a constitution for a global economy modeled on the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.

Quite unlike Hardt and Negri's confused sketch of postmodernist rebellion, Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello and Brendan Smith, three anti-globalization activists and writers, advance a much more practical vision of a decentralized but coordinated "globalization from below." It's a strategy that is both local and global, operating at many social levels, and even juggling contradictory elements (like the discrepancies between Bello and Tonelson). They rightly point to limitations of nationalism, including the hope of "delinking" countries from the world economy. I think they ignore the continued importance of the nation-state, acting with other nations, as a way to control corporations and capital markets and as an arena for democratic action—which ultimately must include winning over political parties and governments to an alternative globalization, even if the social movement retains its independence.

But as a handbook for organization and a catalog of ideas in its "draft of a global program," *Globalization from Below* offers a hopeful, idealistic but still pragmatic call for a new, more democratic global order. ■

Not So Innocent

By Matthew Price

Pity the Victorian bourgeoisie. Upright, uptight, prudish and prim, they were, well, so Victorian. Baudelaire loathed them; Marx vilified them; and Bloomsbury wit Lytton Strachey dethroned their heroes in his waspishly arch demolition job *Eminent*

Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle Class Culture, 1815-1914

By Peter Gay

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Victorians. The combined effects of these assaults have left their reputation in shambles. To be sure, the Victorian middle classes—with their improving ways, their ostentatious rectitude, their coarse philistinism—are easy targets. But if the title of a recent book—*Inventing the Victorians*—is anything to go by, we smug moderns have it wrong: The "Victorians" are a pure figment of the historical imagination.

Historian Peter Gay would no doubt concur with this sentiment. "All generalizations are wrong," he said in a recent interview, and our shopworn

epithets about Victorian culture are merely an incitement for his revisionary zeal. For much of his career, Gay has had one mission: to rescue the Victorian middle classes from the enormous contempt of posterity. In contrast to Gertrude Himmelfarb, schoolmarmish champion of "Victorian values," his work is not marred by overweening political biases; he is far more interested in the fraught psyche of the middle-class mind than the ideological uses of Victorian morality. In his masterly, five-volume historical epic, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, Gay exhaustively catalogued the diverse attitudes of the 19th-century middle classes, their often complicated views on sex, their tastes and passions, their hates and neuroses. It is a work deeply informed by Freudian insights; he put an entire class on the couch and plumbed its mysteries.

In his latest work, Gay has taken up the same preoccupations, drawing on examples from France, Britain, Germany and the Habsburg Empire, which informed his previous work on middle class culture, how we misunder-



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stand it, and how the Victorians are far more modern—indeed far more prophetic of discontents of the contemporary mind—than we would allow.

Alas, *Schnitzler's Century* is but a slight capstone to a monument, a coda that promises more than it delivers. Taking the highly sexed *fin-de-siècle* Austrian writer and doctor Arthur Schnitzler as his representative man, Gay riffs on previous themes—neuroses, aggression, sex—while paying closer attention to the issues of work and religion, subjects he admits “deserve more consideration than I had given them before.” Still, Gay’s caveat—that the book is not “merely a *Reader's Digest* condensation of the bulky texts that have preceded it”—betrays a certain insecurity, for the book too often reads like a thin summary of his thoughtful scholarship in *The Bourgeois Experience*.

Gay’s use of Schnitzler is problematic, and not entirely successful. In Schnitzler’s struggles for self-mastery and his sexual conquests (there were many), his professional obligations, his artistic impulses, Gay wants us to see a more complex vision of bourgeois mores. Schnitzler flits in and out of the narrative, often disappearing altogether for pages at a time. But Schnitzler seems too unique, too extreme. “He was hardly the archetypal bourgeois,” Gay concedes, but also argues that in him we find all the hallmarks of the middle classes: “He dutifully chose a profession, medicine, his father wanted him to enter. He was addicted to work. He cherished his privacy.” Though Gay quotes from tantalizing bits of Schnitzler’s diaries (he kept count of his orgasms), the device is rather glib, and begs more questions than it answers.

Still, *Schnitzler's Century* has its virtues. Contra Marx and others, Gay argues rightly that there really was no such monolith as “the bourgeoisie.” There were simply too many gradations of taste and outlook: “The striking diversity of nineteenth century middle class political aspirations, attitudes towards authority, tastes in art and music, economic resources” work against a category as simplistic as “the middle class.” What has Gay found out

about the middle classes then? On the matter of sex and repression—a Freudian through and through, it’s a favorite subject of his—the middle classes were not so priggish after all, Gay argues. “If ‘Victorian’ is a synonym for ‘squeamishness’ or ‘prissiness,’ the Victorians were not Victorians,” he writes. They had a “tough minded realism about naked physical realities, that presumably more liberated times have not approached, let alone equaled.” Gay cites a few texts like the English *Book of Household Management*, with its gruesome tips on how to behead turtles, frank insights on breast feeding, death and disease that “may stand for a regular pattern of conduct.”

But one is left with the feeling that Gay is just skimming the surface here; his evidence is exiguous, and welcome as his revisions are, one cannot deny that there were prohibitions against overt sexuality. As open as the Victorians may have been to sex and sexuality, to nudity in art (the Victorian nude is the subject of a major exhibition currently in London), they certainly did not live in a culture as saturated in sex as ours. If there was a Victorian equivalent to the ribald provocation of Britney Spears or the crotch-grabbing antics of Eminem, Gay has not found them. In many ways, the Victorians were, one has to admit, Victorian after all. Flaubert was censored; it was the age of Comstock. Even Schnitzler, with his “avid pursuit of sexual conquests,” Gay admits “was not typical of his class, for bourgeois pleasure was generally guarded, tempered, shot through with abstentions.”

His chapters on the middle classes’ often ambivalent views on religion and the uses and abuses of the work ethic are the most successful, and exhibit all the complexity Gay argues were the real characteristics of bourgeois culture. What Gay calls the “gospel of work” was “almost exclusively a bourgeois ideal.” It could be a cruel faith, one that led to deformations of character and economic oppression. Gay incisively notes: “It was not surprising that for Marx’s alter ego [Engels], the bourgeois had to be the villain. ... The gospel of work was typical for the ostentatious middle-class piety behind which, barley concealed, lay the reality of the bourgeois as slave driver.”

One wants more of this kind of observation from *Schnitzler's Century*. If anything, the book is short on economics and politics; though it advertises as a work of cultural, not social history, one does not have to indulge in heavy handed Marxist historiography in order to illuminate the relationship between Victorian economics and Victorian culture. After all, the emergence of the bourgeoisie was as much an economic phenomenon—if not more so—than a cultural one.

But in the end, the problems with Gay’s book are more general. Admirable as he is in his attempt to find affinities with our Victorian cousins, they were still denizens of their era. The old truism still holds: The past is a foreign country. They do do things differently there. ■

Matthew Price wrote about Victor Serge in the December 24 issue.

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Heroes and Survivors

By Joshua Rothkopf

Consider the list of unlucky opponents to face the torrent of words and blows that was Cassius Clay, later, defiantly, Muhammad Ali in his extended prime—Liston, Frazier,

Ali
Directed by Michael Mann
Black Hawk Down
Directed by Ridley Scott

Foreman, terrifying pummelers all—and you just might forget The Man of Steel. Ali drops Superman, cape and caboodle, in that most-hoarded 1974 issue of DC Comics, where reality evicts myth from its own halls of justice. This, my friends, was immortality.

How, then, improve upon the glorious facts? Ali's rise was, in itself, a superbly creative act, a revision of self as much as the ugly expectations of others, unprepared for the modern black man. All of it is well-storied; the better chroniclers, though, have tapped into some of that fleet-footed invention, the spirit of improvisation. Mailer got it when he jogged with the champ in Zaire and allowed himself to be moved by Ali's boasting to skeptics in his own corner, who actually feared for his life: "I'm gonna dance!"

Michael Mann, director of the new *Ali* now in theaters, has it in mind to dance as well; his biopic spans the decade densest in incident—stretching from the brash 1964 triumph over Liston, the challenger a beautifully unblemished 22, to his legendary comeback at the "Rumble in the Jungle," an event hosted and financed by Mobutu—but his probe strays anarchically like a bop sax solo wandering into the high registers. It's a liberated free-form that feels especially relaxed for Mann, an ace student of the concentrated car ride, the furrowed brows of insiders.

You can feel it in his first sequence, a deliriously sustained quarter-hour that combines the heat of a Sam Cooke club gig with a young boy stepping to the back of a bus, his gaze transfixed by a newspaper's headline—the Emmitt Till lynching. The band modulates up a half-step, driving the crowd nuts; the boy is now a man working the punching bag, a blur before eyes fixed with dark thoughts. We explode into the chorus and the ring; and the first of Mann's many raptures get its punctuation.

More about those eyes, though: Will Smith must be the most courageous actor in America, given that his subject could be knocking down the door any minute now, slowed but no less formida-

then the press, and finally his opponent into thinking he was just a rhyme-spouting provocation. (Did Ali invent rap along the way?) That he transcended his own lies with speed and endurance only underlines what was his greatest asset—that crazy mouth, fearless to a fault and all the more dangerous for it.

It's a surprise then, and to Smith's great credit, that he doesn't coast by on wit alone; he keeps it coiled up for long intervals, a risky choice but one that gives his unexpectedly interior Ali a constant glow. Troubled silences are perhaps not the straight facts (confidants remember a wicked self-deprecation) but it's a modulation that feels fresh and resourceful. Mann's camera is another benefit, framing and even defocusing him into an ever-brooding presence. Boxing movies have a tradition of kinetic photography (and Emmanuel Lubezki's fluid flips and jabs don't disappoint) but there is exquisite craft at work here, capturing both the white light of Africa and the monumental rows of overhead spots in a smoky arena, extending into the distance like a sparkling road to destiny.



Let me fix that hair piece, Howard.

ble. Smith has burrowed into the life by every means possible; the body is bulked and conditioned, the tongue a native to those Kentucky cadences as if born and raised. To recall that his landing of the role struck fear into boxing fans is to blush; you'll have to take my word that I, for one, never doubted the Fresh Prince. The chops were always there, most audaciously in his bravura theft of *Six Degrees of Separation* as the con artist. A brilliant scammer is, in fact, what Ali was too, and not disrespectfully so: With each fight, he needed first to trick himself,

We know where that road went; at least half of Ali's greatness was cemented behind the microphone—his public embrace of Islam, his conflicted affiliation with Malcolm X and the Nation, his refusal to fight a war he characterized as racist that cost him years and the title. (One has to wonder if Ali's actions would be received any differently today.) All of this is presented by Mann and his co-writers in impressionistic spurts, along with snippets of televised riots and the squandering of Ali's fortune by irresponsible management; many critics are wishing for something purer.

But Mann is no dummy when it comes to structure, and there's truth to

period in the way his picture saves up its coherence for moments of violence—in the ring or during its brutally staged, inevitable assassination (the scene is stronger than all of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*). Ali's words competed with so much noise, not to mention his own impotence when his boxing license was suspended. He had to get back in that ring, just so he could articulate a release. Gradually, a far more sophisticated theme begins to emerge from Ali—the making, unmaking, and remaking of a man through shrewd publicity—as do two pivotal enablers, expertly played: Howard Cosell (a spookily perfect John Voight) and the majestically afroed fight promoter Don King (Mykelti Williamson), hitching a ride on the wave to redemption, “financial and otherwise.”

Take *Ali* as a study in savvy media comportment and the character deepens; his low point comes on a train during his fallow years, a sullen refusal to acknowledge a fan's enthusiastic “Hey, champ!” It hurts more than his belt being stripped. The tide turns with Ali's receptance of his damaged handler, “Burundi” Brown (Jamie Foxx, feisty, and with unforeseen depth), now clean from drugs and ready for more evangelizing. Ali needed his people, Mann is saying, otherwise he was cut off from power. Concluding with the Rumble may seem too easy, but it's the proper fulfillment of Mann's take: Ali's deliverance to a world audience. Orchestrating the chanting crowd from the mat (“Ali bumaye!”) proves as crucial to his rebirth as the celebrated rope-a-dope that brought Foreman to his exhausted knees.

Of course there's more to the story, and not all of it works as well: The script is accommodating of one too many wives, and an end title emphasizing Ali's current marital bliss is a poor choice. To skip over this complication—the randiness that often rears itself like an occupational hazard to fame—would likely have invited scorn; Mann can't win on this one. But when his daring conception pays off, it's

impossible not to be thrilled by the flow: Ali rampaging out of a hearing, raging at the newshounds and white America, “You my oppressor!” A smash cut suddenly brings us inside the bloody arena, to the poor soul who



Mind if we drop in?

insisted on calling Ali by the slave name Clay, now taking a beating: “What's my name, motherfucker?”

Ali's courage in refusing induction into the Army cannot be overstated, even if his articulation of that stance came later than the movie would have it. The irony is still choking: a natural warrior, barred from his trade and the option of “fighting abroad” (his passport was revoked), who made himself over into a soldier of principled resistance. As a celebrity, his position was explosive—a flashpoint in the public perception of the war. Simply put, he needed a reason for Vietnam and there was none. No such nerve from the makers of *Black Hawk Down*, an appallingly dispassionate account of what should, by any measure, be an indictment of military arrogance.

The estimable Stuart Klawans of *The Nation* compliments his readers with a curt, one-sentence dismissal of this pointless machine-movie, but for the sake of the liberal record, let's lower the boom. The book, by Mark Bowden, was a smash and honorably so: America's gory misadventures in Somalia were, to some brass, an embarrassment that was

best forgotten. Here, however, was an assiduous bit of war reporting—about a crack Special Forces raid on Mogadishu's Bakara market that was supposed to last a surgical half-hour but instead took two days and hundreds of lives, 18 of them ours—outing the disastrous campaign once and for all. Bowden was relentless with the facts, but his multiple-perspective recounting smuggled in more: the haughtiness and shock at seeing our high-tech air superiority toppled to the ground by shoeless indigents.

Ridley Scott, a technical master, thinks he's got this licked by sticking to the blow-by-blow—he'll make his own *Saving Private Ryan*. And he has: Solemn attention is paid to the terrible chronology—to dusty hazes, tortured metal and flesh.

(You won't remember a single performance.) But without those monologues of private fears coming to fruition, it's a tour of duty of utter inconsequence. Does it matter that this is probably the shiniest contraption of Scott's career? I don't understand these virtual-reality war movies, eschewing any kind of commentary for a you-are-there gruesomeness. Who are they made for? Paralyzed veterans? Audiences with staminalas—and stomachs—of iron?

“When that first bullet goes past your head, politics go right out the window,” says one character. Maybe so for a soldier, but art requires a little more. (I won't even touch the matter of seeing scary blacks, rebels of an unvoiced cause, turned into the bursting targets of a video game.) One can only salute with sympathy the uniformed survivors of a government's folly, who did the best they could under orders. But a closing credit makes a shameless nod to current deployments in Afghanistan, the first mention of September 11 in a feature, and even this scant iota of instant-heroism is too much. Help us, Ali: We need you now more than ever, and your fiercely critical intelligence that placed dignity over acquiescence. ■

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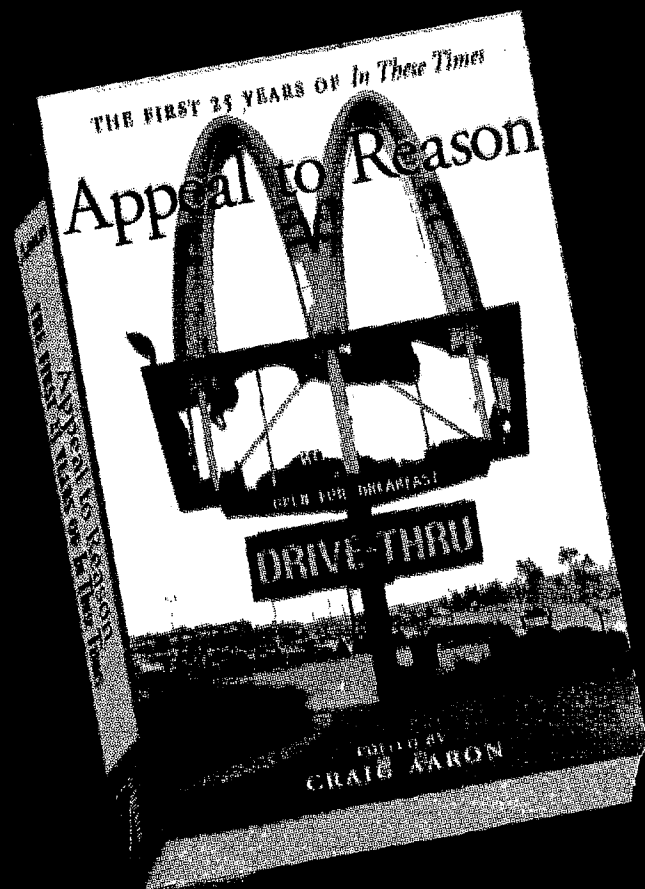
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